

IMAGES OF THE BYZANTINE WORLD

VISIONS, MESSAGES AND MEANINGS
STUDIES PRESENTED TO LESLIE BRUBAKER



EDITED BY
ANGELIKI LYMBEROPOULOU

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Professor Leslie Brubaker

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Visions, Messages and Meanings
Studies Presented to Leslie Brubaker

Edited by Angeliki Lymberopoulou
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- 2 Icon from the Çanlı Kilise, reverse, Saints Constantine and Helena holding the True Cross, late Byzantine period, Aksaray Museum, Cappadocia, Turkey (photo: author).

List of Abbreviations

<i>ArtB</i>	<i>Art Bulletin</i>
<i>ArtH</i>	<i>Art History</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>The Burlington Magazine</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CahArc</i>	<i>Cahiers Archéologiques</i>
<i>CPG</i>	M. Geerard (ed.), <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> (6 vols, Turnhout, 1974–2003)
<i>DChAE</i>	<i>Deltion tes Christianikes Archaialogikes Hetaireias</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>GBA</i>	<i>Gazette des Beaux-Arts</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>JWCI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (8 vols, <i>Indices and Supplementum</i> , Zurich, Munich, Düsseldorf, 1981–2009)
<i>ODB</i>	A.P. Kazdan (ed.), <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> (3 vols, New York and Oxford, 1991)
<i>PLP</i>	H. Hunger (ed.), <i>Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit</i> (12 vols, Vienna, 1976–95; supplements [Appendices 1 and 2], 2001)
<i>PG</i>	J.P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologiae Graecae: Patrologiae Cursus Completus</i> (161 vols, Paris, 1857–66)
<i>RBK</i>	K. Wessel and M. Restle (eds), <i>Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst</i> (5 vols, Stuttgart, 1966–95)
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>

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Leslie Brubaker: Biography and Published Works

Kallirroë Linardou

Biography

Leslie Brubaker was educated at the Pennsylvania State University, USA, from where she obtained first a BA in 1972 and then an MA in 1976. In 1983, she had successfully completed her Ph.D. thesis at Johns Hopkins University, while simultaneously she was employed as an instructor at the Department of Art, Wheaton College, USA (1981/83).

For nearly thirty years, Leslie Brubaker has undertaken uninterrupted teaching work both in the United States of America and the United Kingdom. She served as an Assistant and Associate Professor at the Department of Art, Wheaton College, USA, between 1983/90 and 1990/93 respectively, while between 1993/94 she served as Chair at the same college. In 1994, she moved to the United Kingdom, where she continued her teaching career at the University of Birmingham to the present day. She started as a Lecturer in Byzantine studies (1994/96), became a Senior Lecturer in Byzantine Studies (1996/2001), continued as a Reader in Byzantine Art History (2001/2006), and in 2005 she was appointed a Professor of Byzantine Art History. Between 2003 and 2009, she served as Director of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies of the same University, and from 2005 to 2009 as Assistant Director (Research) of the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity at the University of Birmingham. She is currently serving as Director of the Graduate School of the College of Art and Law there.

Her main field of expertise is Byzantine illustrated manuscripts, with further research interests extending into visual narrative, gender studies, female patronage, Iconoclasm and the cult of icons. Finally, her interest into icons, relics and the proliferation of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Byzantium developed into a major research project subsidized by a AHRC grant.

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Preface

Angeliki Lymberopoulou

The interpretation of Byzantine texts and artefacts has been a central aspect of the work of Leslie Brubaker throughout her career. It is only natural, therefore, that in a volume of essays, dedicated to her on her sixtieth birthday, a range of such interpretations is presented by authors who not only have been important to Leslie as colleagues, friends, and students, but have also benefited greatly from her research, publications and friendship. Its main themes are the identification of 'visions', 'messages', and 'meanings' in various facets of Byzantine culture and the possible differences in the perception of these visions, messages and meanings as seen by their original audience and by modern scholars. The volume addresses the methodological question of how far interpretations should go – whether there is a tendency to read too much into too little or, *vice versa*, not enough attention is paid to apparent minutiae that may have been important in their historical context. As the successive essays span a wide chronological era, the book also presents an opportunity to assess the relative degrees of continuity and change in Byzantine visions, messages and meanings over time. Thus, as is highlighted in the concluding section written by Chris Wickham, the book discusses the validity of existing notions regarding the fluidity of Byzantine culture. It clarifies when continuity was a matter of a rigid adherence to traditional values and when a manifestation of the ability to adapt old conventions to new circumstances. More importantly it shows that, in some respects, Byzantine cultural history may have been less fragmented than is usually assumed. Similarly, by reflecting not just on new interpretations, but also on the process of interpreting itself, the papers combined in this volume demonstrate how research within Byzantine studies has evolved over the past 30 years from a set of narrowly defined individual disciplines into a broader exploration of interconnected cultural phenomena – a development in which Leslie Brubaker has been instrumental.

Editorial Policy

In rendering the Greek names and place-names mentioned in this volume the standard anglicized forms, where they exist, have been used (for example Constantine instead of Konstantinos). For the rest, following a trend that has been gaining acceptance recently, all names have been transcribed as literally as possible avoiding the various latinized versions (Komnenos instead of Comnenus, Nikephoros instead of Nicephorus). If someone was a Latin-speaker, then the ending –us has been, appropriately, maintained (Theodosius, Euphrasius, Claudius). It goes without saying that in all publications cited in the footnotes the names have remained unchanged and appear as their authors intended.

Acknowledgements

This book is a labour of love by many people, who all worked hard and full of enthusiasm to materialize – a clear reflection of Leslie's popularity. Special thanks to Chris Wickham for his invaluable help with organizing this volume, for his many and astute contributions and for his important advice throughout; to John Smedley for his meticulous and precise comments and for allowing it all to happen; to Kalliroe Linardou for providing Leslie's biography and publications; to Rebecca Day for compiling the index; and to Celia Barlow, Beatrice Beup, Rembrandt Duits, Basilius J. Groen, Jonathan Harris, Dimitra Kotoula, Rose Mephram, Diana Newall, Tassos Papakostas, Julie Pardue, Lyn Rodley, Albert Stewart, Andrew Tinson, and Vasiliki Tsamakda for their constructive criticism, useful suggestions, support and help (practical and otherwise). Last, but by no means least I would like to thank all the contributors for their commitment, precision, punctuality and understanding. Obviously all the shortfalls and mistakes in this volume are entirely my responsibility.

'Seeing's believing, but feeling's the truth': Touch and the Meaning of Byzantine Art¹

Liz James

One of the central issues with which Leslie Brubaker's work engages is that of the Byzantines' perception of art.² It is in that context, and building on her insights into visual perception and the meaning of art, that this paper sets out to explore the role of touch in the perception of Byzantine art. As such, it will look for trends within Byzantium; the picture is far more nuanced than might appear here, for this broad-brush approach inevitably condenses a changing society into an apparently static one.

Considering the sense of touch for an art historian seems almost counter-productive, especially as we are so often instructed not to touch in museums and galleries, lest we contaminate or damage the object. For Byzantine art historians, the everyday sense we are accustomed to dealing with in considering the Byzantine world is sight. We are concerned with the visual appearance of Byzantine art and its visual perception by its Byzantine audience. Even when considering the effects that pictures appear to have had on the Byzantines, we think in terms of how the sight of an image might trigger a response. At times, we consider hearing, especially in the Iconoclast period, when some of the debates seem to have been framed in terms of the efficacy and value of seeing against hearing. We might also, thanks to Béatrice Caseau and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, bring in smell as an element in perception, especially in

1 My thanks to audiences in Sheffield, St Andrews and Edinburgh who heard and commented on oral versions of this paper, and to Michelle O'Malley for commenting on the written text.

2 For example, L. Brubaker, 'Byzantine art in the ninth century: theory, practice, and culture', *BMGS* 13 (1989): pp. 53–95; *eadem*, 'Perception and conception: art, theory and culture in ninth century Byzantium', *Word and Image* 5 (1989): pp. 19–32; *eadem*, 'Every cliché in the book: the linguistic turn and the text-image discourse in Byzantine manuscripts' in L. James (ed.), *Art and text in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58–82.

the links between smell and memory.³ Bissera Pentcheva has stressed the significance of all five senses in the context of icons.⁴ But sight is the primary sense to which we return time and again. In part, this is also reasonable in terms of the Byzantines' own attitudes to sight: the eighth-century Iconophile theologian John of Damascus said that 'the first sense is sight', noting that although 'We use all our senses to produce worthy images of [God]', 'we sanctify the noblest of the senses which is sight'.⁵ This was echoed by the eighth-century patriarch, Nikephoros: 'we all know that sight is the most honoured and necessary of the senses'.⁶

However, despite our emphasis on sight, evidence from Byzantium, both in the shape of material objects and in the form of written texts, suggests that the fundamental place of touch in our understanding of the Byzantine world has been overlooked. Touch is one of the crucial ways in which we apprehend the world; it is a fundamental medium for the expression, experience and contestation of social values and hierarchies.⁷ Very simply, objects were, by and large, made to be touched and so it is necessary to consider how they functioned not only as images but also as physical objects in the 'real world'. Projecta's casket in the British Museum is a case in point. It has been studied in terms of its iconography, what it says about fourth-century Christianity, what it might tell us about gender.⁸ Comments have been made about its perceived value.⁹ But the moment the casket is picked up, its status as an object becomes apparent. The first thing that the bearer is aware of is its weight, which is considerable; the second is how awkward it is to carry and how useless its

3 B. Caseau, 'Christian bodies: the senses and early Byzantine Christianity' in L. James (ed.), *Desire and Denial in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 101–10; S. Ashbrook Harvey, 'St Ephrem and the scent of salvation', *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): pp. 109–28 and *eadem*, *Scenting salvation. Ancient Christianity and the olfactory imagination* (Berkeley, 2006).

4 B. Pentcheva, 'The responding icon', *ArtB* 88 (2006): pp. 631–55, and, in the context of this paper, especially her thoughts on the tactility of relief icons and the concept of 'graphe' as touch.

5 John of Damascus, *On the Divine Images* 1, 17, trans. D. Anderson (New York, 1980), p. 25.

6 Nikephoros, *Refutatio et Eversio*, fol. 273v; cited in P.J. Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephoros of Constantinople* (Oxford, 1958), p. 211 and n. 3.

7 C. Classen, 'Introduction', in C. Classen (ed.), *The Book of Touch* (Oxford, 2005), p. 1. On the pervasive nature of touch and its role as a fundamental medium for expression, experience and contestation: Classen, *Book of Touch*; E.D. Hawes, 'Introduction' in E.D. Hawes (ed.), *Sensible flesh. On touch in Early Modern Culture* (Pennsylvania State, 2003), pp. 1–21. More generally on the senses: D. Howes (ed.), *Empire of the senses. The sensual culture reader* (Oxford, 2005). For some thoughts on touch in art: G.A. Johnson, 'Touch, tactility and the reception of sculpture in early modern Italy' in P. Smith and C. Wilde (eds), *A Companion to Art Theory* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 61–74. I am grateful to Flora Dennis for this reference.

8 The standard study is K. Shelton, *The Esquiline Treasure* (London, 1981). See also J. Elsner, 'Visualising women in Late Antique Rome: the Projecta Casket' in C. Entwistle (ed.), *Through a glass brightly. Studies in Byzantine and Medieval Art and Archaeology presented to David Buckton* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 22–36.

9 See the discussion in Elsner, 'The Projecta Casket', p. 24.

handles actually are. In other words, holding Projecta's casket offers a very different reading of it from simply seeing it.

Touch was a pervasive, but perhaps secondary, sense in Byzantium. Almost every Byzantine text contains accounts of touching. The Gospels, perhaps the most important texts in Byzantine ideology, are full of stories of people who touched or were touched by Christ, culminating in Mary Magdalene who was told not to touch (John 20:17) and doubting Thomas who wanted to place his hand in Christ's wounds to be assured that Christ had risen (John 20: 24–9). Hagiography details a myriad of saints who performed miracles through touch. Saint Artemios, the patron saint of male genital injuries, would appear in visions to the afflicted and heal them through painfully squeezing, trampling or lancing their diseased testicles.¹⁰ Symeon the Stylite (c.389–459) was touched by Antonios to discover whether he was dead; Daniel the Stylite (409–93) was physically defrosted by his followers; Theodore of Sykeon (d. 613) averted a plague of locusts by holding three in his hand and praying over them until they died.¹¹ Ascetic saints used touch in a variety of ways to mortify the flesh, through wearing fetters or hairshirts, or by standing on columns, for example. Touching is apparent in every possible human context, from tearing out tongues to kissing babies. Texts – manuscripts – were themselves tactile objects and touching them formed part of their performative role.¹² In his sixth-century account of the ambo of Hagia Sophia, Paul the Silentiary suggests that during the liturgy, the priest held the 'golden book' aloft whilst the crowds strove to touch it with their lips and hands, breaking around the ambo like the sea.¹³ A letter could not only be treasured for what it said but for its actual physical existence.¹⁴ If Byzantine readers used a pointer or their finger to trace words on the page, then the act of reading was itself tactile.

10 V.S. Crisafulli and J.W. Nesbitt (eds), *The Miracles of St Artemios* (Leiden, 1997), e.g. Miracles 13, 29, 35.

11 Symeon the Stylite: *Life of Symeon the Stylite* by Antonios, trans. R. Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (Kalamazoo, 1992), ch. 28. Daniel the Stylite: *Life of Daniel the Stylite*, ed. H. Delehay, *Les saints stylites* (Brussels and Paris 1923), ch. 43; trans. E. Dawes and N. Baynes, *Three Byzantine saints* (Crestwood, 1977). Theodore of Sykeon: *Life of Theodore of Sykeon*, ed. A.-J. Festugière, *Vie de Theodore de Sykeon* (Brussels, 1970), ch. 36; trans. Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine saints*.

12 R.S. Nelson, 'The discourse of icons, then and now', *ArtH* 12 (1989): pp. 144–57, especially pp. 154–5 on kissing manuscripts. R.S. Nelson, 'Empathetic vision: looking at and with a performative Byzantine miniature', *ArtH* 30 (2007): pp. 489–502, opens ways of discussing touch in the context of performance. A. Papalexandrou, 'Memory tattered and torn: spolia in the heartland of Byzantine Hellenism' in R.M. van Dyke and S.E. Alcock (eds), *Archaeologies of memory* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 56–81, has hinted at tactility in the context of sculpted inscriptions.

13 Paul the Silentiary, *Description of the Ambo of Hagia Sophia*, ed. P. Friedlander, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1912), lines 245–51.

14 M. Mullett, 'The language of diplomacy' in J. Shepard and S. Franklin (eds), *Byzantine diplomacy* (Aldershot, 1992), pp. 203–16.

A sense of tactility does come across in Byzantine writings about art, above all in mention of different qualities of materials, especially smoothness and roughness, weights and measures: the mention of floors of onyx 'so smoothly polished' that they were like water congealed to ice; of unpolished stones used for rough steps; of gilding with pure gold two fingers thick; of corrugated altar-covers; and of gold crosses, 80 pounds in weight and encrusted with jewels.¹⁵ One thing that this tactility reveals is the monetary value of art. It also underlines that touching something serves to verify it in some way, as with the experience of handling Projecta's casket. Sight does not tell us everything about the intrinsic qualities of an object. It cannot reveal its weight, for example, or its texture.¹⁶ Touch does. So holding something might serve as a guarantee of quality or of quantity.

Although it is never explicitly stated in Byzantine writings, aesthetically Byzantine art invites touch. As I have argued elsewhere, entering a building was in part a tactile experience, with the movement from exterior to interior, warm to chill, the change of materials underfoot, the range of objects to make contact with.¹⁷ The marble sheathing used in great churches offered a sense of coolness to any worshipper who might choose to touch it, and the very stones of a building could be used in tactile prayer, as with the column of Saint Gregory the Wonderworker in Hagia Sophia on which the faithful rubbed themselves in search of healing.¹⁸ The near-three-dimensionality of, for example, some Byzantine ivories or the metal icon of the Archangel Michael, surely offered their owners a tactile experience, unless we believe that they were enclosed in cabinets of curiosities to be kept out of the reach of idle hands.¹⁹ When the appearances and functions of such objects are considered, touch is usually overlooked, but perhaps should be included in these contexts. The hardstone cups, such as the Chalice of the Patriarchs, that spring to life when raised to the light, had to be handled in the first instance.²⁰ How did the enamels and jewels that so often form a part of Byzantine decoration of these objects

15 'Floors of onyx': Digenis Akritis, *The Grottaferrata and Escorial versions*, trans. and ed. E. Jeffreys (Cambridge, 1998), Grottaferrata Text, Book 7, lines 56–8; 'rough steps': Paul the Silentiary, *Description of the Ambo of Hagia Sophia*, lines 214–15; 'two fingers of pure gold and gold crosses of eighty pounds': *Narratio of Hagia Sophia*, ed. T. Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Leipzig, 1901), vol. 1, pp. 15 and 16.

16 See C. Classen, 'Touch in the museum' in Classen (ed.), *Book of Touch*, pp. 275–9, for a discussion of these themes in a museum context.

17 L. James, 'Senses and sensibility in Byzantium', *Arth* 27 (2004): pp. 522–37.

18 This story is recorded by Anthony of Novgorod, cited by G.P. Majeska, *Russian travellers to Constantinople in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries* (Washington, 1984), p. 214 and n. 68, and by Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. E.H. McNeal (Columbia, 1936), p. 106.

19 On the icon of Michael: Pentcheva, 'Responding icon', pp. 639–40.

20 The most recent image and catalogue entry of the Chalice of the Patriarchs is in R.S. Cormack and M. Vassilaki (eds), *Byzantium 330–1453* (London, 2007), p. 402 (cat. 81). On the visual aspects of the chalice: Pentcheva, 'Responding icon', p. 643.

interact with physical hands on the object? Were they positioned in such a way as to provide a grip for the fingers and a stimulus of touch? As with Projecta's casket, one would need to handle such objects to see where the hands might best fit. Further, if this particular cup was used as a chalice in the liturgy, then touch would have been very much a part of any user's experience of it, ahead, perhaps of sight, and so we should consider what it feels like.

It is a truism that the Byzantines engaged physically with works of art. Written sources contain many stories about people holding, kissing, hugging, biting, consuming works of art. Some physically carried icons with them wherever they went, either on their person or in their luggage.²¹ Amulets and pilgrim tokens, or eulogia, were worn or carried by believers, their physical proximity on the body causing relief.²² The fourth-century pilgrim, Egeria, described chunks being taken out of relics of the True Cross via the teeth of the faithful; removing the fingers and toes of saints in this way was also a popular pilgrim activity.²³ One very well-known story tells of a woman healed by Saints Cosmas and Damien after drinking part of a wall-painting of the saints, and clay eulogia were regularly consumed by believers seeking healing or protection.²⁴ One of the most significant of all holy images, the Mandyllion of Edessa, was formed not through painting but through touch. As an *acheiropoietos* image, an image not made with human hands, it was created through physical contact when Christ washed his face and, in drying it on a cloth, left the imprint of his features there. As the cloth came into contact with other objects, so the image continued to replicate itself.²⁵ Paradoxically, bodily contact with images played a major role in Iconoclasm when images were physically destroyed, eyes gouged out, and figures covered up or mutilated in some way.

None of this should be surprising; it would be more remarkable if writers did not mention touch. In a way, touch has been overlooked because it is so banal and everyday a sensation; it is a part of the human condition to be tactile. However, societies have their own rules of touch and so in this context, the contexts of touching in Byzantium can tell us something of the social customs of that society: the socialization of touch; the tactile codes of communication and the rules of contact – what might be expressed as the difference between

21 See, for example, *Miracula SS Cosmae et Damiani*, ed. L. Deubner *Kosmas und Damian* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1907), Miracle 13; partial trans. in C. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine empire 312–1453. Sources and documents* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 138–9.

22 G. Vikan, 'Art, medicine and magic in early Byzantium', *DOP* 38 (1984): pp. 65–86.

23 *Itinerarium Egeriae*, ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, *Itineraria et alia geographica* (Turnhout, 1965), ch. 37.3; trans. J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (Warminster, 2002).

24 *Miracula SS Cosmae et Damiani*, Miracle 15.

25 For the Mandyllion: A.M. Cameron, 'The history of the image of Edessa: the telling of a story', in C. Mango and O. Pritsak (eds), *Okeanos, Studies presented to Ihor Ševčenko* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984), pp. 80–94; H. Kessler and G. Wolf (eds), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Milan, 1998).

a handshake and a kiss, what it meant to kiss the feet of an emperor, the hands of a saint, the lips of an icon, how the bite of a dog and the bite of the believer on the True Cross were understood. Issues such as these relate to ideas of social decorum: who could touch whom, when, where and how?²⁶ What was touch for? Why and what did people touch? Which parts of an icon, for example, were touched? How did people touch different things? What did touch achieve? Conventions about tactile interaction (even something as 'simple' as gender differences) give information about social differentiation, about defining personhood and status. Standards of acceptable forms of touch change as concepts of proper forms of corporeal behaviour and social order change. There are different rules of decorum. The idea of biting the True Cross is shocking now, but this was a time when relics were treated roughly; they were regularly stolen, snatched, or torn asunder.²⁷

Images of touch can add to our knowledge of hierarchies and relationships between people in Byzantium. It is often assumed, for example, that hands are veiled when coming into contact with holy objects or figures. This is true, but only up to a point. In the sixth-century apse mosaic of the Eufasian Basilica in Poreč (Fig. 1.1), for example, as the viewer moves out from the centre, the Virgin's hands are bare touching Christ, the angels flanking them extend one bare hand but the hands holding their sceptres are inside their robes.²⁸ Beyond them, Saint Maurus to the viewer's left and the saint to the right hold their crowns of martyrdom in veiled hands. On the left again, Bishop Eufasius brings his church with veiled hands, but the Archdeacon Claudius, at the far left, holds a book in his bare hands, though his small son holds candles in veiled hands. To the right, the two anonymous saints carry their tokens, a book and a crown, in veiled hands. This one mosaic alerts us to the knowledge that whose hands were veiled when is more complicated than simply contact with the holy. Why in this image did Claudius' hands remain unveiled? In similar vein, in the sixth-century apse mosaic of San Vitale in Ravenna (Fig. 1.2), one of the angels touches the shoulder of Saint Vitale with a bare hand, though his other hand is veiled. In Sant' Apollinare Nuovo (Fig. 1.3), some of the male and female saints hold their crowns with veiled hands or one veiled hand, others touch their crowns with bare flesh. Should we see the veiling as random and accidental at the artists' whim? Does it depend on the

26 For decorum: M. Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth-century Italy* (Oxford, 1972) and L. Syson and D. Thornton (eds), *Objects of virtue: art in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2001). On touch and communication generally: R. Finnegan, 'Tactile communication' in Classen (ed.), *Book of Touch*, pp. 18–25.

27 A. Eastmond, 'Body vs. column: the cults of St Symeon Stylites' in L. James (ed.), *Desire and denial in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 87–100.

28 See A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic splendor* (Penn State, 2007) on this church and its mosaics, esp. pp. 109–16 on this scene.



Fig. 1.1 Apse mosaic showing the Virgin and Child enthroned, angels, saints, clerics, laymen and Bishop Eufrasius, mid-sixth century, Eufraasian basilica, Poreč (photo: Renco Kosinožić, used with permission).

saint? To answer these questions, a more detailed study of veiling, within a broader context of touch and its significance, is necessary.

As these examples also illustrate, touch can indicate social hierarchies: angels touch saints, not *vice versa*. Who Christ touches when may also be suggestive: Christ in his divinity never touches anyone, but in scenes of his life on earth, touching is far more prominent, both by Christ and of Christ.²⁹

²⁹ In this context, I wonder if there is a change after Iconoclasm in the relationship between Christ and touch.



Fig. 1.2 Apse mosaic showing Christ, angels, St. Vitalis and Bishop Ecclesius, mid-sixth century, San Vitale, Ravenna (photo: author).



Fig. 1.3 Mosaic showing female saints processing up the nave, mid-sixth century, north wall, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna (photo: author).

Donor images in manuscripts are equally telling when it comes to touch. In the tenth-century Leo Bible (Vat. Reg. Gr. 1, fol. 2v), the donor, Leo, is pictured with his exposed hands proffering his book to the Virgin. She touches the material book only with the very tips of her fingers and gestures towards, but does not make physical contact with Christ, located above her. Considerations of the social relationships involved in touch are crucial in human affairs: the frisson of horror that shook British society when in 1992, Paul Keating, then Prime Minister of Australia, touched the Queen, earning the nickname 'Lizard of Oz', makes that very clear. In Byzantium, social relationships of touch also played a part in divine matters, and to explore this, it is necessary to unpack the tactility of religion.

Scholars tend to treat religious services as essentially visual events in which the congregation functions as spectators, watching what is going on. Worship, however, is a participatory act and so touch plays as great a role as vision. The visual formed a backdrop as worshippers actively engaged on a physical level with objects within a church. Touch enabled the congregation to show their love and respect for the holy. Worshippers, sometimes individually, sometimes together, kissed doors, columns, relics and, above all, icons. They made gestures with the whole body, bowing, kneeling, and prostrating themselves. Tactility was a key feature of religious ritual and ceremony: from total immersion in baptism to the Eucharist, from the touch of the priest's hand and the feel of the communion bread, the chalice and paten, to stretching up to pray, lighting candles, kissing icons, kissing each other.³⁰ Religious images and objects were not regarded as 'works of art' displayed to be admired at a distance for their formal qualities; they were powerful vehicles of the holy, to be handled, used and venerated.³¹ The objects that are now often defined as 'works of art' were, and are, in fact sacred vessels with a function, and that function invariably included touch.

In this context, perhaps it should be asked when and why is an icon kissed or touched (and, indeed, where). It has been well-said that touching a portrait, and we might think here of a photograph of a loved one, is all about intimacy, the likeness of the portrait invoking the human presence and the 'natural' response to touch that presence: it might be to kiss and fondle, or it might be to slash and destroy.³² When a portrait is kissed, this suggests an exchange in which materiality is not denied; rather it suggests that a living presence, that

30 T.F. Mathews, 'The sequel to Nicaea II in Byzantine church decoration', *Perkins Journal* 41 (1988): pp. 11–21; K. Ware, "'My helper and my enemy': the body in Greek Christianity" in S. Coakley (ed.), *Religion and the body* (Cambridge, 2000 reprint), pp. 90–110 (esp. pp. 101–8).

31 Icons started being appreciated as works of art only in the fifteenth century: A. Lymberopoulou, "'Pro anima mea'", but do not touch my icons: Provisions for private icons in wills from Venetian-dominated Crete', in D. Stathakopoulos (ed.), *The Kindness of Strangers. Charity in the Pre-Modern Mediterranean* (London, 2007), p. 84 and n. 76, 77.

32 R. Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London, 1991).

of the person depicted, is made apparent through touch. Kissing an icon is like kissing a portrait, coming into contact with the living presence of the person depicted. A sense of this is given by theological writings of the eighth century, from the period of controversy known to us as Iconoclasm, when the Byzantine world was divided over the place of religious images, most specifically icons, in religious worship.³³ This dispute was a battle about the corporeal reality of Christ, made present through the representation of God in religious images: could a corporeal representation be made after the image of the incorporeal and divine God? How could a material image represent Christ?³⁴

Although both sides framed the debate in terms of the visual, the material and the tactile also had parts to play. One of the points about the icon was that its materiality made the divine visible, and with that visibility came tactility. For the Byzantines, the material world and the spiritual world could be brought together – conjoined – through visible, tangible images, and the spiritual world was made tactile in an icon. This is a view very different from attitudes in the medieval West, where some theologians separated the material world from the spiritual realm.³⁵ In the period of Iconoclasm, we see the Byzantines bringing the two together. With icons, touch played a part in the justification of religious imagery, and touching an icon reinforced the more abstract theological belief of its nature in portraying the divine. Touch, as well as sight, made the holy person present through his or her icon. It was no wonder that holy images could respond in tactile ways to the believer or non-believer, by bleeding, exuding oil, even causing death.³⁶ Icons suggested that matter was not inanimate.

In this context of the animation of matter, relics also played an important role. Relics possessed something of the power of the saint. They were not dead and inanimate but rather were dynamic material presences, objects endowed with life and with agency.³⁷ Unlike looking at an object, touching

33 L. Brubaker, 'Icons before Iconoclasm?' in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, (2 vols, Spoleto, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 1215–54.

34 G.B. Ladner, 'The concept of the image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclast controversy', *DOP* 7 (1953): pp. 1–34.

35 A. Louth, 'The body in Western Catholic Christianity' in Coakley (ed.), *Religion and the body*, pp. 111–30.

36 Bleeding icons: of Christ, *The letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos and related texts*, trans. and eds J.A. Munitiz, J. Chrysostomides, E. Harvalia-Crook, Ch. Dendrinos (London, 1997), 7.12 and 7.13a, pp. 46–7; of the Virgin, *Letter of the Three Patriarchs* 7.7, pp. 40–41. Exuding oil: an icon of Saint Theodora of Thessaloniki, *Vita S Theodora Thessal.* ch. 54, ed. S.A. Paschalidis, 'Ο βίος τῆς ὁσιομυροβλήτιδος Θεοδώρας τῆς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ. Διήγησις περὶ τῆς μεταθέσεως τοῦ τιμίου λειψάνου τῆς ὁσίας Θεοδώρας' (Thessaloniki, 1991) with modern Greek translation; trans. A.-M. Talbot, 'St Theodora of Thessalonike' in A.-M. Talbot (ed.), *Holy Women of Byzantium* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1996). Causing death: an icon of the Virgin, described in Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. De Boor (2 vols, Leipzig, 1883), vol. 1, AM 6218.

37 G. Frank, *The memory of the eyes* (Berkeley, 2000). A. Gell, *Art and agency: an anthropological theory* (Oxford, 1998); D. Chidester, 'Material terms for the study of religion',

it is two-way. Wearing an amulet, for example, kept the faithful in constant physical contact with the image it portrayed or the person it was once a part of; it or, more accurately, the holy figure, touched the wearer in return. At this point of physical contact, miracles could occur: an eulogia of Symeon Stylites the Younger (591–92) was crumbled to still the sea; in the Tuesday procession of the Hodegetria icon, according to Stephen of Novgorod, writing in the fourteenth century, the icon directed its blindfolded bearers through touch.³⁸ Touch was a means of possessing the relic and thus the holy. Questions about who might want to touch a relic, who could touch it, why would they touch it, when would they touch it, who controls the touch, what could its touch do for the toucher – the difference between access to the imperial collection of relics and the relics of a saint in his own public church – all these issues combine to build up a 'social history' of touching which, for Byzantium, remains unwritten.

Furthermore, relics are corporeal, sharing the paradox of icons: both displayed and verified God's corporeality, using materials to reveal the reality of the divine. With relics, Georgia Frank has discussed the equally paradoxical situation of the pilgrim who, in visiting holy men and holy women, travelled to experience a corporeal, tangible, divine human body.³⁹ Pilgrims were great touchers. Everything we read tells of them touching relics, gathering dirt, rubbing inscriptions. Touch, like sight, could cross the boundaries between the holy and the human and seems to have been a fundamental part of religious experience. But touch also had potential for destruction: in the hands of pilgrims, holy men could, literally, fall apart, as the fourth-century monk, Paphnoutios, discovered when he grasped the arm of a holy man and it disintegrated into dust.⁴⁰

In considering touching the holy, I want to reflect, briefly, on attitudes towards that corporeal, divine human body of which relics were living proof. The conventional view of Early Christian and Byzantine attitudes to the body tends to be that the Christian monastic tradition saw flesh as the metaphor for fallen man and the irrational rejection of God; and that the passionate

Journal of the American Academy of Religion 68 (2000): pp. 367–80 (esp. p. 377).

38 Symeon Stylite the Younger: *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune*, trans. and ed. P. van den Ven (Brussels, 1962 and 1970), p. 236. Stephen of Novgorod, text and trans. in Majeska, *Russian travellers*, p. 37; quoted and discussed in B. Pentcheva, *Icons and power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (Penn State, 2006), pp. 133–4. G. Vikan, 'Byzantine pilgrims' art' in L. Safran (ed.), *Heaven on earth: art and the church in Byzantium* (Pennsylvania State, 1998), pp. 229–66, includes many examples of the miraculous tactility of pilgrimage art.

39 Frank, *Memory of the eyes*, esp. p. 118. Although Frank's primary concern is with sight, she has some important discussions of touch, including its relation with sight and memory.

40 Paphnutius, *Vita Onnophrios*, ed. E.A.W. Budge, *Coptic texts* (London, 1914–15), vol. 4, ch. 2; trans. T. Vivian, *Paphnutius, Histories of the monks of Upper Egypt and the Life of Onnophrius* (Kalamazoo, 1993), pp. 145–6.

body needed disciplining through diet, meditation and constraint.⁴¹ It was the Christian's duty to master the threat of the body. But, if touch is used as a way of understanding attitudes to the physical in Byzantium, then, as Kallistos Ware has shown, this view needs nuancing or, perhaps, even reversing.⁴² He suggests that, in Greek Christianity, what is apparent is not a rejection of the body but a tension or an ambivalence: in theory the body is fundamentally good, though in practice, it may be more problematic. Ascetic practices are almost always defined as mortifications of the flesh, punishing the body to make it holy, depriving it of sensation or offering it sensations of the more unpleasant kind, especially where touch is concerned. However, texts about asceticism, as Ware points out, actually present a more balanced view than this, suggesting that asceticism might be seen as a struggle for the body rather than against it. Many ascetic texts give the body an important sensory role. John Klimakos, writing in the seventh century, said of his body: 'he is my helper and my enemy, my assistant and my opponent, a protector and a traitor'. 'How can I hate him when my nature disposes me to love him? ... How can I escape from him when he is going to rise with me?'⁴³ This is a more ambivalent attitude to physicality than one that locates the body as enemy.

Ware has shown how human physicality was understood by early Christians in various ways which he explains as bids to resolve the tension between the Hebraic-biblical tradition of the holistic understanding of human person and the Platonic-Hellenistic tradition of soul/body dualism.⁴⁴ Into this mix came the Fall of Man and the question of the distinction between the pre- and post-Fall body, the idea of the Word becoming flesh and the role played by the physical body of Christ, embodying salvation, and the belief in the resurrection of the body at the Second Coming – something inherently sinful could not rise again. In this context, the body, physicality and tactility became positives: the created body was a temple because it was potentially holy and was created by God. As Ware says, it is worth noting how often ascetics are rewarded by 'things of the flesh'.⁴⁵ The ascetic Onouphrios (c.400) suffered all sorts of bodily mortifications, but was rewarded by wonderful food from God; Anthony's physical austerities did not reduce him to withered skin and bone but restored him to a more healthy and natural state; Symeon the Stylite, despite 'stinking like a dog', passed away in an odour of holiness.⁴⁶

41 See for example, P. Brown, *The body and society. Men, women and sexual renunciation in Early Christianity* (London, 1989); B.S. Turner, 'The body in Western society: social theory and its perspectives' in Coakley (ed.), *Religion and the body*, pp. 15–41 (esp. pp. 21–2).

42 Ware, 'My helper'.

43 John Klimakos, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, trans. C. Luibhead and N. Russell (New York, 1982), chs 185–6.

44 Ware, 'My helper', p. 91.

45 Ware, 'My helper', pp. 99–100.

46 Paphnutius, *Vita Onnophrios*, ch. 2; Anthony: Athanasios, *Life of Anthony*, sections 14 and 93; Symeon the Stylite: Antonios, *Life of Symeon Stylites*, chs 8 and 29.

In all of this, it is critical to be aware of how the Byzantines themselves rated touch and the senses. As is well-known, the Byzantines believed that sight was a tactile medium and that seeing was a tactile experience.⁴⁷ Rays from the eyes came out and embraced the object being regarded, bringing it back to the mind, imprinting its form on the memory. In this context, the words of the ninth-century Patriarch Photios, in his homily on the image of the Virgin in the apse of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, are frequently cited: 'Having somehow through the outpouring and effluence of the optical rays touched and encompassed the object, [sight] too sends the essence of the thing seen on to the mind ... Has the mind seen? Has it grasped? Has it visualised? Then it has effortlessly transmitted the forms to the memory.'⁴⁸

Photios' statement suggests that for the Byzantines sight and touch worked very similarly, that they were in fact convergent or even conjoined senses, a philosophy of the workings of sight derived from the Classical philosopher Aristotle.⁴⁹ In Western thought, Aristotle is seen as placing sight and touch as the top and bottom ends of the scale of senses. However, his view of touch is more complicated than this implies. For Aristotle, touch may not have been the most noble sense but it does seem to have been the primary sense, the most necessary sense, without which no other sense was possible.⁵⁰ Unlike the other senses, it does not belong to a single organ; indeed, does it have an organ: are skin and flesh the organs of touch or the media of touch? Is the heart the organ?⁵¹ Rather, touch is a sense of communication, bringing distant objects into proximity. In the *De Anima*, it is clear that there is a distinction made between valid sensory pleasures and bestial or carnal appetites. As Aristotle notes, humans are the only sentient beings able to make this distinction for their sense of touch is far more developed than that of anything in the animal kingdom.⁵² Touch, like sight, can be carnal; but like sight, it can also be profound. It can verify, it can communicate presence and empathy, it brings together body, world and flesh. Susan Stewart has suggested that for Aristotle, touch was the sense needed for being; the other four senses were necessary

47 R.S. Nelson, 'To say and to see: ekphrasis and vision in Byzantium' in R.S. Nelson (ed.), *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 143–68.

48 Photios, *Homily* 17, 5. Text in: Photios, *Homilies*, ed. B. Laourda (Thessaloniki, 1959). This translation comes from C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople: Translation and Commentary* (Harvard, 1958), p. 294.

49 R. Sorabji, 'Aristotle on demarcating the five senses' in J. Barnes, M. Schofield and R. Sorabji (eds), *Articles on Aristotle, Psychology and Ethics* (London, 1997), vol. 4, pp. 134–65; T.K. Johansen, *Aristotle on the sense organs* (Cambridge, 1998); M. Paterson, *The senses of touch. Haptics, affects and technologies* (Oxford and New York, 2007), pp. 2–3, 17–20 discusses Aristotle. Also see the discussion in Frank, *Memory of the eyes*, p. 118.

50 Aristotle, *De Anima*, ed. W.S. Hett (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1936, repr. 1975), III, xiii, 435a, lines 13–14.

51 Ibid., II, xi, 422b–4a; III, I, 424b; III, xiii, 435a and 439a; Johansen, *Aristotle*, pp. 199–215.

52 Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, ix, 421a, lines 22–6.

for well-being.⁵³ In Aristotelian terms therefore, touch might be understood as the most profound of the senses. Aristotle also appears to say that sensible perception depends on touch, that is to say contact between the perceptible object and perception itself: the perceiving organ needs a means of being in touch with the object. For sight, hearing and smelling, this medium is air or water. Sight, hearing and smell all work through touch (as, indeed, does taste). For Aristotle, it seems the case that we relate to the world through a single sense organ, the body, in which all the senses are united. Following Aristotle, it might be argued that the single sense organ is the organ of touch.

The Byzantines appear to have shared these views. The tenth-century *Souda* lexicon, a compilation of entries ranging from etymologies and grammatical forms, to accounts of people and places, discusses touch on several occasions.⁵⁴ The entry under *aisthesis*, *senses*, borrows considerably from the sixth-century philosopher, John Philoponos and from Aristotle.⁵⁵ It describes sight as clearer than hearing, hearing as clearer than smelling, and smelling as clearer than either touch or taste. But touch, it suggests, is not really a sense at all, but is present in relation to defining the properties of anything and everything: the other senses all share qualities of tactility.

Touch mattered in Byzantium. Being present in relation to defining the properties of anything and everything, touch was all-embracing. Touch had meaning in Byzantium. What the Byzantines touched and how they touched it were everyday social conventions; the tactile body was itself an everyday object and, for the Byzantines, God was an everyday tangible reality. In this context, using the senses to deal with the incomprehensibility of God was perfectly sensible. It is we who struggle with the paradox within Byzantine art, that of the use of the material and sensual to achieve the spiritual, a placing of the living or dead body at the centre of religious experience, a use of the tactile to apprehend the divine, whilst attempting to transcend the body through the use of the senses. Edith Wyschogrod's statement that 'Touch is not a sense at all; it is in fact a metaphor for the impingement of the world as a whole upon subjectivity ... to touch is to comport oneself not in opposition to the given but in proximity with it'⁵⁶ is one that any Byzantine might have recognized.

53 Ibid., III, xii, 434b, lines 23–6: 'an animal cannot exist without a sense of touch'. Also see *ibid.*, III, xii, 435b, lines 19–26. S. Stewart, 'Remembering the senses' in Howes (ed.), *Empire of the senses*, pp. 59–69 (esp. p. 61).

54 *Suida Lexicon*, ed. A. Adler (Leipzig, 1928–29), for example A 207, A 2733, A4561.

55 Ibid., A 326. For a translation and commentary: *Suda On Line*, <http://www.stoa.org>. The headword is 'aistheseis', translated as '5 senses'.

56 E. Wyschogrod, 'Doing before hearing: on the primacy of touch' in F. Laruell (ed.), *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris, 1980), pp. 179–203; quoted in Paterson, *Senses of touch*, p. 147.

Memories of Buildings? Messages in Late Antique Architectural Representations

Maria Cristina Carile

The most obvious, overreaching, message conveyed by Paris.gr.510 is that images mattered: material presence had meaning.

Leslie Brubaker¹

In my early days as a doctoral student, this sentence from Leslie Brubaker's influential book on the ninth-century imperial manuscript of Gregory Nazianzenos' *Homilies* was a major incentive for deciphering the meaning behind late antique architectural representations. Building depictions have mostly been studied for their potential in the reconstruction of ancient architecture, although they are generally neglected as backgrounds of little importance in the context of great decorative programmes. In this paper, I argue that the function of architectural representations goes beyond the depiction of buildings and that, when analysed in their context, these images become bearers of messages.

I will base my discussion on two categories of late antique architectural representations: the church models in sixth-century church mosaic, and the depictions of buildings on fourth-century metalwork. These buildings are not simply frames for the composition but constitute meaningful elements in their context. I will analyse them, consider the scholarly debate and address the question of the significance of these depictions for the patron and beholder. Without proposing a general model applicable to any architectural representation, I will approach the messages conveyed in these two categories as forms of memory.

1 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 400.

Buildings in the Patrons' Hands: Churches and Likeness

Models of buildings in the hands of their patrons are a trope in the late antique church apses. Two mid-sixth-century monuments at Ravenna and Poreč show this iconography, allowing us to compare the architectural representation to the (extant and well-preserved) buildings represented. At San Vitale in Ravenna, the archbishop Ecclesius is shown holding the model of a round building (Fig. 2.1). The same pattern appears in the apse of the basilica at Poreč, where the archbishop and founder of the church, Eufrasius, is represented holding a basilical building model (Fig. 2.2). They both share the convention of the bishop founder with the church model.² Because the 'message' here is regarded as obvious scholars have shown little interest in discussing these church models in further detail. However, if one examines them with greater attention, their identification with the church buildings becomes far from obvious.

Unlike the represented model, the real San Vitale is not circular but octagonal and has a door and two rows of three windows on each side, as well as an octagonal drum with a large window on each side. In addition, it has a large narthex with two stair towers (a typical feature of late antique basilicas) on the sides and an apse flanked by two *pastophoria*, all of which are absent from the model. It is thus quite difficult to recognize the actual church in Ecclesius' model (Fig. 2.1).

At Poreč, the Eufrasian basilica is a large building ending in an apse, with a squared atrium on its western side. Its sides and central nave originally had nine windows each, and its apse four. Although the apse, the central nave and one lateral nave are recognizable in the model, it lacks the three doors, the atrium and the windows of the original (Fig. 2.2).³ Furthermore, the attempt at a three-sided representation of the building in a sort of compound of perspectives not only creates a disproportionately large depiction of both the apse and the entrance on the façade in relation to the model as a whole and to the original, but also ultimately results in a failure to offer a recognizable depiction of the basilica itself and its architectural characteristics.

The subject of architectural representation is a complex one because it is charged with historiographical approaches that have favoured either a functional or symbolic understanding of architecture and art. As such, it is the

2 This late antique pattern saw developments in later periods and in a wide geographic context. For a new approach: E.S. Klinkenberg, *Compressed Meanings. The Donor's Model in Medieval Art to Around 1300* (Turnhout, 2009); for an interpretation of these models as maquettes: Č. Marinković, 'Founder's Model – Representation of a Maquette or the Church?', *Byzantine Studies* 44 (2007): pp. 145–55.

3 M. Prelog, *Poreč. Grad i spomenici* (Beograd, 1947), pp. 93–106; A. Terry and F. Gilmore Eaves, *Retrieving the Record. A Century of Archaeology at Poreč (1847–1947)* (Zagreb, 2001) for restorations; A. Terry and H. Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor. The Wall Mosaics in the Cathedral of Eufrasius at Poreč* (2 vols, University Park, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 2–6.



Fig. 2.1 Apse mosaic showing Christ, angels, St. Vitalis and Bishop Ecclesius, mid-sixth century, San Vitale, Ravenna (and detail with Ecclesius) (photo: author).

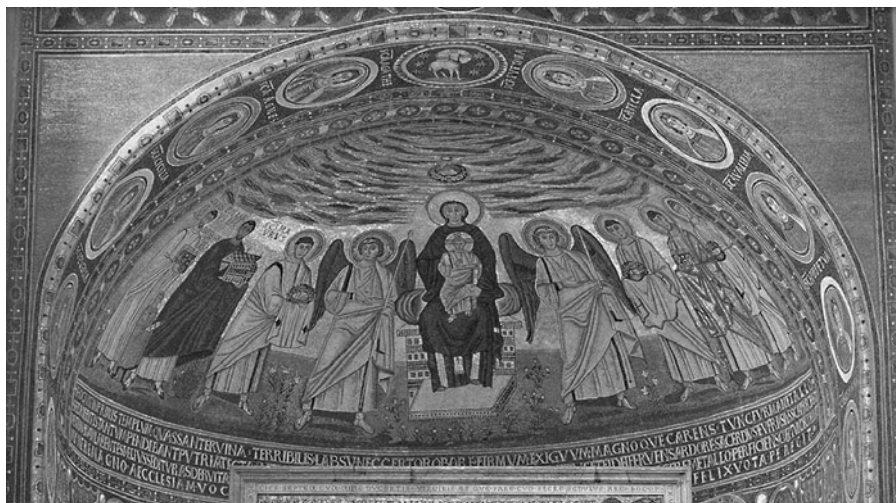


Fig. 2.2 Apse mosaic showing the Virgin and Child enthroned, angels, saints, clerics, laymen and Bishop Eufrosius, mid-sixth century, Eufrosian Basilica, Poreč (and detail with Eufrosius) (photo: Renco Kosinožić, used with permission of Ann Terry and Henry Maguire).

subject of a heated debate among scholars. After Ejnar Dyggve discarded any literal interpretation of late antique depictions of architecture,⁴ in the 1940s Richard Krautheimer addressed – and largely solved – the major problems of architectural representation, pointing out the parallel between the inaccuracy inherent to an architectural copy or representation in painting or sculpture to its counterpart in medieval literary descriptions.⁵ In these representations, the actual building seems broken into pieces, some of its elements carefully chosen before being regrouped in the final depiction. The ‘copy’ resulting from this process is quite different from the original, as it does not reproduce all the elements of the latter, their structural relationships or relative dimensions. However, the inaccuracy of the copy is counterbalanced by the reproduction of the content and significance of the building, which are the major concerns in the creation of a building’s copy or depiction.⁶ Some 20 years later, Paul Lampl reached the same conclusion by schematizing the most common principles of medieval representation of buildings from the fourth to the twelfth century.⁷

Noël Duval devoted much of his work to architectural representations, analysing a substantial amount of evidence and defining interpretative schemes largely concentrating on the depiction of basilicas.⁸ Duval affirms

4 E. Dyggve, *Ravennatum Palatium Sacrum. La basilica ipetrale per cerimonie* (København, 1941) claims that late antique architectural representations did represent real buildings, however translating them into a flat and two-dimensional view. Much of the discourse on late antique architectural representations has developed around the image of Theoderic’s palace in the mosaics of Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna and Dyggve’s ‘reconstruction’ of this image as a *basilica discoperta*.

5 R. Krautheimer, ‘Introduction to an “Iconography of Medieval Architecture”’, *JWCI* 5 (1942): pp. 1–20.

6 Krautheimer, ‘Introduction’, pp. 19–21.

7 P. Lampl, ‘Schemes of Architectural Representation in Early Medieval Art’, *Marsyas*, 9 (1960–61): pp. 6–13.

8 The author developed his understanding of late antique architectural representations through a study of the images of the Utrecht Psalter and the already-mentioned mosaic of Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo: N. Duval, ‘La représentation du palais dans l’art du Bas-Empire et du Haut Moyen Age d’après le Psautier d’Utrecht’, *CahArc*, 15 (1965): pp. 207–54; ‘La mosaïque du *palatium* de S. Apollinaire le neuf représente-t-elle une façade ou un édifice aplani?’, *Corsi di Cultura sull’Arte Ravennate e Bizantina*, 25 (1978): pp. 93–122 revised in ‘Que savons-nous du palais de Théodoric à Ravenne?’, *Mélanges d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Ecole Française de Rome*, 72 (1960): pp. 337–71. Just like in the Utrecht Psalter the illustrator depicted the Temple of Jerusalem, the king’s palace, and the *ecclesia* as an apsidal basilica (Duval, ‘La représentation du palais’, p. 254), at Ravenna, the image of Theoderic’s palace represents an apsidal hall (Duval, ‘La mosaïque du *palatium*’, pp. 112–14). According to Duval, the basilica is a conventional image that may represent a church as well as an imperial palace and the basilica type, within or without a walled enceinte, is also a symbolic representation of the city: N. Duval, ‘La représentation des monuments dans l’antiquité tardive. À propos de deux livres récents’, *Bulletin Monumental*, 138 (1980): pp. 77–95 and ‘Le rappresentazioni architettoniche’, in M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata (eds), *Umm al-Rasas Mayfa’ah. Gli scavi del complesso di Santo Stefano* (Jerusalem, 1994), pp. 165–230.

that late antique depictions of buildings are 'synthetic representations':⁹ some are more schematic and others more elaborate, representing the original by combining internal and external elements in a sort of 'flattened perspective' (*perspective aplanie*).¹⁰ This leads Duval to develop a series of schemes that allow him to do the opposite process and reconstruct the 'original building' (or buildings) from the depiction.¹¹ In the majority of cases, neither a standing 'original building' nor sufficient archaeological evidence exists to evaluate Duval's rendering of the building and, in turn, his reconstruction. His theory is based on the conviction that late antique architectural representations are purely conventional.¹² However, in the case of church models in the hands of their patrons, he admits both a realistic and a symbolic value, insofar as the model generally recalls the building without being an accurate and complete depiction.¹³ In my opinion, these inaccurate models do contain very realistic elements and their symbolic character goes far beyond the simple issue of recalling the original.

As has already been pointed out, it would be difficult to identify the original church from the models discussed here, despite the reproduction of some distinctive features of the originals. In Poreč, the sort of crenellation supporting the upper roof in the Eufasian model can be seen in the northern side of the original church, where a row of small corbels projects out of the wall to support the roof gutter.¹⁴ The original building probably bore two crosses rather than the three represented in the model. The curtain drawn to one side, which partially covers the entrance, also represents the one that was hung on the hangers still visible on the original doors.¹⁵ In Ecclesius' model, the brick

9 Duval, 'La représentation du palais', p. 254. Duval developed further an idea already found in Krautheimer and Lampl.

10 For a recent reassessment of his views: N. Duval, 'Note additionnelle', *Antiquité Tardive*, 7 (1999): pp. 394–400.

11 Duval, 'La représentation du palais'; *idem*, 'Le rappresentazioni architettoniche', p. 350 fig. 12; *idem*, 'Note additionnelle', pp. 394–400.

12 This effectively suggests that the role of architecture itself is essentially functional, with no significant symbolic value. For Duval's view of church models: Duval, 'Note additionnelle', p. 394. According to Duval, the city's main church is sometimes used to represent the city as a whole in the eastern mosaic vignettes (Duval, 'Le rappresentazioni architettoniche'). However, images of palaces, such as Theodoric's or those in the Utrecht Psalter, are just generic representations (Duval, 'La mosaïque du *palatium*'). Agreeing with Duval, also G. De Francovich, *Il Palatium di Teodorico e la cosiddetta 'architettura di potenza'* (Roma, 1970) claims architectural representations as purely conventional frames for images.

13 N. Duval, 'Représentations d'églises sur mosaïques', *Revue du Louvre*, 22.6 (1972): p. 445.

14 For corbels outside the northern nave: Terry and Eaves, *Retrieving the Record*, p. 129.

15 E. Russo, *Il complesso eufasiano di Parenzo* (Napoli, 1991), pp. 17–22. At San Vitale holes for the hangers are still visible on the only extant original door (the north-eastern one).

roof of San Vitale's ambulatory¹⁶ and its central bronze roof¹⁷ are respectively represented with red and greenish cubes, while the original bronze cross, still preserved today,¹⁸ is emphasized by a sort of golden lavish base. One therefore sees that, although some features reproduce original elements, both models offer idealized representations of the crosses.

The models were clearly intended to depict the real churches albeit in very general terms, and therefore do not allow for the reconstruction of the original as a whole. This has already been underlined for textual descriptions of buildings,¹⁹ but it is important to underline it in this context for clarifying the scholarly debate on architectural representation. The rather generic character of the model might be due to the difficulty in reproducing a large building on a smaller scale. Yet the models do contain details that correspond to elements of the original buildings, and those details may have been selected among others to be depicted in the model precisely because they were intended to convey further messages.

In the Eufasian model the disproportionate size of the entrance which covers the entire façade suggests its idealized meaning as a whole. Although this could just be due to the simplification of the façade in a model that was meant to be seen from a distance, sources mention that the rebuilding of Poreč's church was motivated by Eufasius' desire to provide the Christians of the city with a larger, more beautiful church as a display of faith.²⁰ In this context, representing a huge entrance with the curtain drawn to one side in place of three doors and a small atrium – which are, from a modern perspective, the most interesting features of the church – was perhaps a way to emphasize the openness of the church for the congregation.

16 The ambulatory originally had a wooden ceiling, probably covered in brick tiles, which was replaced by new vaults during the Middle Ages: F.W. Deichmann, *Ravenna. Hauptstadt des spätantiken abenlandes. Kommentar* (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 51. For the restorations: N. Lombardini, 'Le vicende del monumento dal 1860 ad oggi: l'eliminazione delle superfettazioni' and 'Scheda 147' and Silvia Foschi, 'Appunti per una cronologia delle trasformazioni architettoniche di San Vitale', in P. Angiolini Martinelli (ed.), *La basilica di San Vitale a Ravenna* (2 vols, Modena, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 59, 66 (n. 6), 97, 99–100, 102–3, 180–81.

17 The roofs of San Vitale have never been the subject of a detailed study. However, the central nave has probably always been covered in bronze and the ambulatory in brick tiles: Deichmann, *Ravenna*, pp. 65–9. Archival documents mention that the bronze tiles of the central roof were replaced on several occasions: Foschi, 'Appunti', p. 67 n. 37; Lombardini, 'Le vicende', p. 96.

18 The original cross, which was substituted for a copy, is now preserved in the Museo Nazionale di Ravenna: E. Marcato, 'Scheda 699', in A. Martinelli, *La basilica*, vol. 1, p. 247.

19 On the characters of *ekphrasis* however with reference to the middle Byzantine period: H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 22–3; L. Brubaker, 'Perception and Conception: Art, theory and Culture in Ninth-century Byzantium', *Word and Image*, 5.1 (1989): pp. 19–32; L. James and R. Webb, 'To understand ultimate things and enter secret places: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium', *ArtH*, 14.1 (1991): pp. 1–17.

20 Concerning written sources and inscriptions: B. Molajoli, *La basilica eufasiana di Parenzo* (Padova, 1943), pp. 26–7; Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, vol. 1, pp. 4–5.

Just like the other figures in the apses, Ecclesius and Eufrasius have both hands covered under their cloak (*poenula*), generally considered as a sign of reverence when approaching a king or divinity.²¹ Both mosaics are set in heavenly gardens where the figures stand against golden backgrounds, which reveals the extra-temporal, holy character of the scene,²² and are located as the holiest point of the building, the apse. The church model is thus presented in a gift to Christ or to the Virgin by the bishops who started the building of the churches. It is therefore clear that, besides its value for the Christian community, the church bore a strong celestial or heavenly character.²³

The fact that they are held in their founders' hands also suggests that the models carry another message. This powerful image is both the metaphorical embodiment of the bishop's devotion and the reason to remember him. Both bishops' names appear in inscriptions.²⁴ At San Vitale, Ecclesius was originally mentioned in the apse mosaic inscription and in other two ancient inscriptions placed in the narthex and atrium.²⁵ They describe Ecclesius as the *mandans* of the church, thus not as the 'patron' but the bishop who gave the permission (*mandatum*) for the building of the church, in other words its founder.²⁶ The church model therefore acts as a memory of the building: its appearance recalls the original, and it reminds the beholder of the early history of the building, its founder and its construction.

Ecclesius founded San Vitale around 526 and then, after construction took place during the bishoprics of Ursicinus (533–36) and Victor (538–45), Maximian inaugurated it in 547–48.²⁷ Although the meagre literary evidence

21 See Liz James in this volume.

22 D. Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 105–38.

23 In late antique *ekphrasis* on the inauguration of churches they are often celebrated both as offerings to God and as heaven: Eusebios, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. E. Schwartz (Leipzig, 1955), X.iv.2–3, 22–3, 62–5 on the fourth-century church of Tyre; in Prokopios' and Paul the Silentiary's sixth-century *ekphrasis* of Hagia Sophia the church is built by the emperor for God and the heavenly symbolism is expressed in its interior and sanctuary: Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis*, ed. P. Friedländer (Leipzig and Berlin, 1912, repr. Hildesheim and New York, 1969), ll. 115, 214–54, 275–80, 345, 1015; Prokopios, *Buildings*, ed. H.B. Dewing (London, 1940), I.i. 60–65.

24 Although Eufrasius' existing inscription at Poreč is the product of restorations, there is no reason to assume it does not reproduce the original: A. Terry and H. Maguire, 'The Wall Mosaics at the Cathedral of Eufrasius in Poreč: Second Preliminary Report', *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 6 (2000): p. 172; G. Bernardi, *I mosaici della basilica eufrasiana di Parenzo* (Rovigno, 2005), pp. 63–4. For the inscriptions: H. Maguire, 'Eufrasius and Friends. On names and their absence in Byzantine Art', in L. James (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 146–57.

25 The inscriptions that are now lost are known through Agnellus and an eighteenth-century transcription: Agnellus, *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. D. Mauskopf Deliyannis (Turnhout, 2006), LXI p. 231; C. Ricci, *Monumenti. Tavole storiche dei mosaici di Ravenna. San Vitale* (Rome, 1935), pp. 18–19; Deichmann, *Ravenna*, pp. 7, 15–19, 27–9, 48–9; C. Franzoni, 'Scheda 148', in A. Martinelli, *La basilica*, vol. 1, pp. 181–3.

26 For discussion on the Latin terms *mandans* and *mandatum*: Deichmann, *Ravenna*, pp. 7, 15–19; Franzoni, 'Scheda 148', pp. 182–3.

27 Deichmann, *Ravenna*, pp. 10, 48–9.

makes it impossible to trace the construction phases, the bulk of the work took place under Ecclesius, Victor and Maximian,²⁸ with an interruption during the Gothic siege of Ravenna (between Ecclesius' death in 532 and the Byzantine re-conquest of the city in 540). The memory of the figures who were involved in the building process echoes in the church decoration: Justinian and Theodora are represented in the apse mosaic panels and the monograms of the *argentarius* Julian and of Victor are still visible on capitals and imposts, just as Eufrasius' name appears in monogram on the central door at Poreč, which was founded and inaugurated in the mid-sixth century.²⁹ Furthermore, at Ravenna the bishops were also buried in the *prothesis* of the church.³⁰

When Maximian completed the building, the memory of his fellow bishops was therefore echoing throughout the church, in the form of inscriptions, monograms and burials. Maximian emphasized especially the role of Ecclesius in the church's construction and immortalized his memory for posterity in various ways and places within the edifice. Besides the church model as a memory of building, here Maximian's acknowledgement of Ecclesius' role is a conscious act of reiteration and materialization of memory.³¹

Thus the churches in Poreč and in Ravenna use different ways to immortalize the memory of the patrons in the building, yet the model resting in its founder's hand is the most powerful and immediate image to convey that message. Apart from the conventional character of the scene and the models' very generic rendering of architecture, the models convey further messages that, as we have seen, tell of the history of the building and of its significance for the patron or the beholder.

Villas in Gold and Silver

Representations of architecture as memory and model are also found in late antique artefacts. Four inlaid metalwork objects from the fourth century will be considered here, in order to assess how depictions of buildings, especially the private architecture of the wealthy, were meant as different kinds of models

28 Ibid., pp. 10, 48–9.

29 For the patronage of San Vitale and the role of the imperial couple: I. Andreescu Treadgold and W. Treadgold, 'Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale', *ArtB* 79.4 (1997): pp. 709–23. For Poreč: Terry and Maguire, *Dynamic Splendor*, pp. 4–5.

30 Ricci, *Monumenti*, pp. 4–5.

31 Beside the monograms, which were surely planned as part of the church's architectural decoration, the two inscriptions that mention Ecclesius are both attributed to Maximian: Ricci, *Monumenti*, pp. 18–19. According to Andreescu Treadgold and Treadgold, 'Procopius', pp. 709–23, the mosaic was completed by Victor, who was also portrayed beside Justinian in the imperial panels until Maximian replaced it with his own.

with a high evocative character: a bronze plaque of unknown origin (Fig. 2.3),³² as well as three large silver plates coming from hoards, the Kaiseraugst so-called 'Meerstadtplatte' (Fig. 2.4),³³ the Cesena plate (Fig. 2.5),³⁴ and the Sevso hunting dish.³⁵ In all these items the architectural depictions do not function as simple frames for the main decorative subjects but seem to play an important role as meaningful elements of the composition.



Fig. 2.3 Bronze plaque, mid-fourth century, Florence, Museo Archeologico (inventory no. 2589) (courtesy of the Archivio Fotografico, Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici della Toscana, Florence).

Much scholarship has been devoted to these metalwork objects, especially the plates.³⁶ The structural similarities between them have raised several hypotheses about a possible common origin, but ultimately these have been

32 The bronze plaque is large and concave, bearing holes along its edge, indicating that it was originally nailed to the back of a wooden chair. Florence, Museo Archeologico, inventory no. 2589, length 63 cm, height 16.8–8.9 cm, thickness 0.7 cm, bronze with silver and copper inlay: G. De Tommaso, 'Spalliera di trono', in F. Bisconti and G. Gentili (eds), *La rivoluzione dell'immagine* (Milano, 2007), pp. 142–3.

33 Augst (Switzerland), Römermuseum, inventory no. 1962.2, height 4.7 cm, diameter 59 cm, diameter of the central medallion 16.3 cm, weight 4749.9 g, niello-inlaid silver plate with gilding: E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, 'Meerstadtplatte', in H. Cahn and A. Kaufmann-Heinimann (eds), *Der spätromische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst* (Derendingen, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 206–24 and B. Rütli, 'Platte mit Villa am Meer (Meerstadtplatte)', in A. Demandt and J. Engemann (eds), *Imperator Caesar Flavius Constantinus. Konstantin der Grosse* (Mainz, 2007), CD Catalogue no. I.11.2.

34 Cesena (Italy), Museo Archeologico, inventory no. SAE 129, diameter 63 cm, weight 6000 g, niello-inlaid silver plate with gilding: P.E. Arias, 'Il piatto argenteo di Cesena', *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene*, 8–10 (1946–48): pp. 310–44.

35 Sevso Treasure, height 3 cm, diameter 70.5 cm, diameter of the central medallion 25.5 cm, weight 6673 g, niello-inlaid silver plate with gilding. The dish shows hunts on its central medallion and outer border, and includes a banquet scene at the centre and a small architectural representation on its rim: M. Mundell Mango, 'The Sevso Treasure Hunting Dish', *Apollo*, July (1990): pp. 2–11, 65–7; M. Mundell Mango and A. Bennet, *The Sevso Treasure* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 55–122.

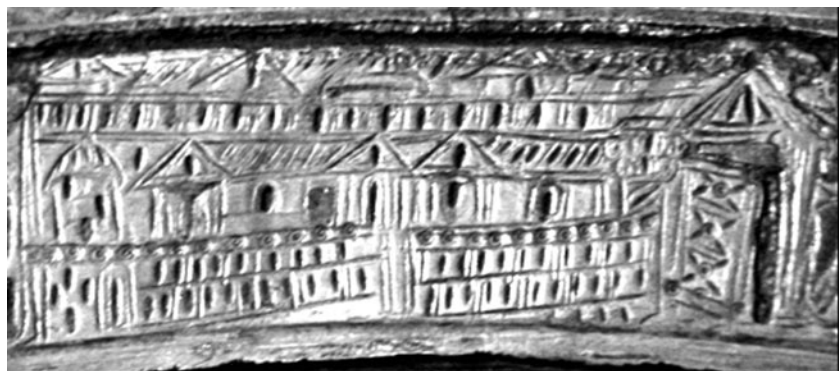
36 References here only to major and most recent publications, which include further bibliography. The bronze plaque has been dated to the post-Costantinian era: De Tommaso, 'Spalliera di trono', pp. 142–3. The Kaiseraugst dish dates from around 340; the Cesena plate likely belongs to the second half of the fourth century; and the Sevso hunting dish



Fig. 2.4 Meerstadtplatte, c.340, Augst, Römermuseum (inventory no. 1962.2)
(and detail with the central medallion) (photo: Dieter Widmer [Basel],
courtesy of the Museum Augusta Raurica, Augst, Switzerland).



Fig. 2.5 Large silver dish, second half of the fourth century, Cesena, Museo Archeologico (inventory no. SAE 129) (photo: courtesy of the Laboratorio Fotografico, Biblioteca Malatestiana, Cesena); opposite, detail with architectural representations: the bottom one is shown upside down (photo: author).



discarded by Mundell Mango's detailed and definitive study.³⁷ While their architectural representations have served in attempts to reconstruct ancient buildings,³⁸ we have seen in the previous paragraph that such attempts are hazardous at best. Furthermore some architectural representations, such as those depicted in these objects, may have been purely imaginary. Based on these images, it is in fact difficult to decipher the structural relationship between the various parts of the buildings. In the Meerstadtplatte, for instance, facades topped with pediments or domes are depicted near colonnades supporting roofs, without forming coherent architectural structures.

The architectural representations have mostly been interpreted as country villas,³⁹ although some scholars have read the buildings of the Kaiseraugst plate and the two structures on the rim of the Cesena plate as cities.⁴⁰ On the Cesena plate, for instance, the buildings on the rim feature a large door and a walled enceinte. The pediment on the door seems to extend into a roof on the side above the wall. However, a number of other structures with pediments, roofs and even a dome are represented between the wall and the roof. On the Meerstadtplatte, the wall circuit has three openings and several buildings appear behind them. These depictions are essentially different, despite the display of some similarities such as surrounding walls with entrances topped with domes or pediments – elements that could be the main features of a city. However, late antique depictions of cities that adopt the point of view of an observer standing outside the walls, include great walls, towers, monumental entrances and, in most cases, buildings that could easily and clearly be

is dated within the fourth century or between 350 and 430: Mundell Mango, 'The Sevso Treasure', pp. 8–10.

37 Ibid. Hypotheses on the locations of the plates' production, based primarily on their inscriptions and silver stamps, remain speculative. Their iconography has also been compared with mosaics and other artwork as evidence to document late antique daily practices: K. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet. Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 144–8.

38 For example, the architecture depicted on Kaiseraugst dish has been 'broken into pieces' and reassembled in Duval's interpretation of the iconography as a late antique city: N. Duval, 'L'architecture sur le plat dit "à la ville maritime" de Kaiseraugst (première moitié du IV^e siècle): un essai d'interprétation', *Bulletin Monumental*, 146.4 (1988): pp. 341–53.

39 For the Florence plaque: A. Minto, 'Spalliera in bronzo decorata ad intarsio del R. Museo Archeologico di Firenze', *La Critica d'Arte*, 1 (1936): pp. 127–35; De Tommaso, 'Spalliera di trono', p. 143. For the Kaiseraugst plate: Alföldi-Rosenbaum, 'Meerstadtplatte', pp. 221–2; K. Schefold, 'Der Silberschatz und seine Stellung in der spätantiken Kulturgeschichte', in Cahn and Kaufmann-Heinimann (eds), *Der spätromische Silberschatz*, vol. 1, pp. 413–14; Rütli, 'Platte mit Villa'. For the Cesena Plate: M. Bollini, 'Elementi antiquari nei piatti argentei romani', *Studi Romagnoli*, 16 (1965): pp. 103–6. For the Sevso plate: Mundell Mango, Bennet, *The Sevso Treasure*, pp. 93–4.

40 Kaiseraugst plate: Alföldi-Rosenbaum, 'Meerstadtplatte', pp. 221–2; Duval, 'L'architecture sur le plat', pp. 341–53; Cesena plate: Arias, 'Il piatto argenteo', pp. 314, 332–3.

identified as churches or temples.⁴¹ In the Kaiseraugst plate, the central opening – a domed and arched entrance flanked by columns – may seem quite monumental, yet it lacks any defensive element such as doors or towers. Furthermore, in the depictions discussed here, the walls – the main feature of city representations – are very low and lack any military components such as crenellations or towers.

The settings of the buildings are the wild nature for the Florence chair back, a pastoral green for the Cesena and the Sevso plates, and a river or sea shore for the Kaiseraugst plate. From the archaeological evidence, we know that great estates in the countryside comprised a conspicuous group of buildings, the functional and productive units of the villa,⁴² and that some of them had walled boundaries.⁴³ Furthermore, domes, pediments, doors, porticoes, exedrae, columns and walls were common features of high domestic and public buildings in Late Antiquity. From their outstanding elements – which are clearly different from contemporary depictions of cities shown from this particular point of view – these objects likely represent villas or great estates with their structures.

In the decoration of the objects discussed here, the buildings all occupy central positions. On the chair back, they fill the round space at the top and serve as the background for the main representation, which is a hunting scene. In the Kaiseraugst plate they cover exactly half of the central medallion and although they are located in the background of the fishing scene, they attract the beholder's attention constituting one of the main subjects of the representation. On the Sevso plate, all the decoration of the border rim is organized around the building.⁴⁴ On the Cesena plate, the architectural representation plays a more complex role. In its medallion the building is only part of the setting, the main theme being the banquet and the representation of the country life. Other structures with a more elaborate design appear on

41 For late antique representations of cities: bibliography in Duval, 'Le rappresentazioni architettoniche', p. 205 n. 1 and C. Bertelli, 'Visual Images of the Town in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', in G.P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins (eds), *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden-Boston-Köln, 1999), pp. 127–46. Duval interprets architectural representation on the Kaiseraugst plate as a depiction of three churches: Duval, 'L'architecture sur le plat', pp. 341–53. However, the visual evidence he offers in support of his opinion is sometimes chronologically far removed from the Kaiseraugst plate and generally includes inscriptions or small crosses that clearly identify either the city or the church – elements that are all missing from the 'Meerstadtplatte'.

42 Piazza Armerina's villa offers a good example of the vast extension and the variety of buildings that composed late antique villas: A. Carandini, A. Ricci, M. de Vos, *Filosofiana, la villa di Piazza Armerina* (Palermo, 1982).

43 In areas such as the Danube and Balkan provinces, particularly at risk of invasions and robberies, country villas were sometimes fortified with walls: L. Mulvin, *Late Roman Villas in the Danube-Balkan regions* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 33–5; C. Sfameni, *Ville residenziali nell'Italia tardoantica* (Bari, 2006), pp. 235–41.

44 Mundell Mango, 'The Sevso Treasure', p. 5.

the border, in the axis of the medallion, thereby creating a link between the rim's and the medallion's decoration. Although the rim is quite damaged, we can safely assume that the buildings were symmetrically depicted only on the vertical axis, since the extant left side of the horizontal axis shows a hunting scene. The buildings depicted on the rim are set in the middle of pastoral scenes. Roundels, with portraits that are impossible to identify but frame the whole plate border, separate the pastoral scenes with the buildings from sections with hunts. The rim seems to reproduce an image of life in the countryside around great estates that is echoed in the medallion.

The central place that architectural representations take and their connection to hunting themes on each one of the objects discussed here all point toward the semantic domain of life in the countryside, where rich owners had great mansions to hunt and spend their leisure time, far from the daily duties of their urban life.⁴⁵ The theme of hunting also has a long-standing connection to display of personal power. The banquets appearing on the Cesena and Sevso plates convey parallel connotations of status and good manners.⁴⁶ Given the frequent representation of hunting scenes and banquets on Roman and late antique metal works and mosaics, we could imagine them as being a trope expressing an aristocratic status.⁴⁷ However, the connection of these two themes to architectural representations is rarer, thus hardly making the particular pattern discussed here a 'trope' of late antique art. The scarcity of extant representations that combine hunting, banquet and architecture might simply be the result of an unfortunate coincidence; but in that case, even if the occurrence of these themes was conventional, it should not be underestimated since tropes and conventions constitute important indicators for mentalities.⁴⁸

Mosaic pavements bearing similar scenes – as for instance in the villa of Piazza Armerina and in many North African villas – are found *in situ*, therefore connecting the representations with the archaeological contexts of those great mansions where hunts and banquets were taking place and

45 Among the vast bibliography on the architecture and decoration of late antique villas, see especially: S. Ellis, 'Power, Architecture and Décor: How the Late Roman Aristocrat Appeared to His Guests', in E.K. Gazda (ed.), *Roman Art in the Private Sphere. New Perspectives on the Architecture and Décor of the Domus, Villa and Insula* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 117–34; Sfameni, *Ville residenziali*, esp. pp. 8–22.

46 On the relevance of hunting and banquets scenes in the display of personal power: F. Ghedini, 'Caccia e banchetto: un rapporto difficile', *Rivista di Archeologia*, 16 (1992): pp. 72–88; G.L. Grassigli, 'Il regno della villa. Alle origini della rappresentazione della villa tardoantica', *Ostraka*, 9 (2000): pp. 119–226; K. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 141–74.

47 See note 45 and for example, the so-called 'small hunt' mosaic at Piazza Armerina or many African mosaics: Carandini, Ricci, de Vos, *Filosofiana*, pp. 175–87; K. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 78–9, 252–3, 273.

48 Brubaker, 'Perception and Conception', p. 25.

allowing for more precise dating and understanding.⁴⁹ In this architectural context too, hunting and banquet scenes are the reflection of rich owners' real practices; representations of villas in these mosaics probably represent the owner's estates.⁵⁰

The combined appearance of hunting, architectural and banquet scenes on mosaic decoration offers a reliable basis for interpreting the items under examination, which were all found out of context.⁵¹ The juxtaposition of hunting and architectural (as well as convivial) images suggests both a familiarity with these activities and the suitability of this iconography to decorate rich silverware and, in the case of the chair back, furniture.

The choice of the raw material (bronze, silver and gold) as well as that of the technique (niello and gilded silver or copper inlaid metalwork) indicates the peculiarity of the objects. Precious metals were valued not only for their monetary value but also for their shining effects: with the right lighting, they could create light plays enhancing the visual appearance of the place where they were kept.⁵² Although studies on late antique metalwork have shown that metalwork and especially silver is found in association to a broad social spectrum,⁵³ the rich decoration, large size and high quality of the items discussed here suggest wealthy owners. To borrow Leader-Newby's

49 For the life in late antique villas: J. Arce, '*Otium et negotium*: the great estates, 4th–7th centuries', in L. Webster and M. Brown (eds), *The Transformation of the Roman World. AD 400–900* (London, 1997); Sfamini, *Ville residenziali*, pp. 166–89.

50 See, for example, the famous *dominus Julius*' mosaic and the mosaic floor with three villas of Tabarka now on display at the Bardo Museum at Tunis: Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa*, pp. 119–23. For North African mosaics with architectural representations: T. Sarnowski, *Les représentations de villas sur les mosaïques africaines tardives* (Warsaw, 1978), discussed in N. Duval, 'La représentation des monuments dans l'antiquité tardive', *Bulletin Monumental*, 138 (1980): pp. 77–95.

51 The chronological frame for the diffusion of this pattern ranges from the third to the sixth century for mosaics and from the fourth to the fifth century for silver plate. According to Grassigli, 'Il regno della villa', pp. 199–216, the iconography on metal objects and mosaics developed separately; however the appearance of the same themes on both these media is a meaningful expression of mentality.

52 Late antique authors have long celebrated the shining effects of precious metalware exalting their inherent light symbolism: F. Baratte, 'Observations sur la vaisselle d'argent et ses possesseurs à la fin de l'antiquité', *Annals de l'Institut d'Estudis Gironins*, 36 (1996): pp. 74–6; M. Mundell Mango, 'From 'glittering sideboard' to table: silver in the well-appointed *triclinium*', in L. Brubaker and K. Linardou (eds), *Eat, Drink and Be Merry (Luke 12:19) – Food and Wine in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 127–8. On the relationship between vessels and interior décor: E. Swift, 'Decorated Vessels: the Function of Decoration in Late Antiquity', in L. Lavan, T. Putzeys and E. Swift (eds), *Objects in Context, Objects in Use* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 401–7.

53 See especially: Baratte, 'Observations', pp. 63–79; A. Cameron, 'Observations on the distribution and ownership of late Roman silver plate', *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 5 (1992): pp. 178–85.

observation, made in reference to the Sevso plate, the decoration of these plates shows 'the idealized image of the owner and his lifestyle'.⁵⁴

The wooden chair to which the bronze plaque was originally nailed would have been an expensive piece of furniture, playing the double role of a seat and of an indicator of the owner's means, good taste and perhaps status. Large dishes such as the ones discussed here were probably used for banquets or simply put on display in houses where, along with the décor and furniture, they would serve as ways for the house owner to display his wealth, elegance and culture to his guests.⁵⁵ An inscription on the Sevso plate also reveals that they could also be transmitted through inheritance from generation to generation.⁵⁶ Since the plates served both as objects to display to the guests and as heirlooms, their owners would have valued their iconography's power to convey an image of their life as they wished it to be.

Given the simultaneous appearance of hunting and banquet themes on the domestic mosaics and metalware of rich households, representation of great country villas could recall real architecture and serve as a memory of the owner's properties and, in turn, wealth and might. When appearing on house objects and room decoration, such images were meant to reproduce the same impression of wealth given by the appearance of the villas in the countryside. Representations of country mansions, however, should not be considered as strictly accurate 'photos' of the estates, because they also bear a strong ideal and symbolic value. Villas represent a location, the country mansion, around which are taking place the activities from which the owner built his wealth (symbolized in the pastoral scenes) and in which he spends his free time (hunts and banquets). Great domestic architecture – real or imaginary – was considered as an icon and even imaginary villas could serve as representations of the household's elite status for future generations. Thus, these depictions of villas convey messages and work as a model for both the purchaser-patron, who saw them as a symbol of himself, and the beholder, who associates those images to the 'real life' of great estates' owners.

In this paper, I have tried to demonstrate that the two categories of architectural representations analysed acted as 'models', idealized reproductions symbolizing their patrons and conveying the same meaning

54 R. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 7. For the ideal character of these representations: Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, pp. 146, 164, 174; Grassigli, 'Il regno della villa', pp. 199–226.

55 For the use of such silverware: Mundell Mango, 'From "glittering sideboard" to table', pp. 128–30.

56 Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society*, pp. 3–4. For the inscription: Ibid., p. 1; Mundell Mango and Bennet, *The Sevso Treasure*, pp. 75, 77. See also: Baratte, 'Observations', p. 66. In a fifth-century poem celebrating the beauty of the villa owned by the Pontius family at Burgus, Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, ed. A. Loyen (Paris, 1960), XXII. 142–4, writes that an inscription placed on the main door recorded the names of the founders 'to posterity'. Thus, this villa was carrying the same meaning as the Sevso plate to future generations.

as the building represented. These images interacted with their context and, through this, conveyed messages going beyond their appearance as buildings. Beside the significance of buildings as cues for memories in late antique rhetoric⁵⁷ and the importance of domestic architecture and decoration as a tool for memory,⁵⁸ depictions of buildings can serve as memories, both realistic and symbolic. Church models in apse programmes bear messages, involving the memory of the bishop and the character of the church itself as the founder's gift to God. The depiction of villas on metal objects points towards the acceptance in wealthy circles of the villa theme as a conceptual place, a symbol immortalizing the image of the owner's power and culture to guests as well as to posterity. Thus, while the meaning of late antique architectural depictions resides in the representation of the building as a model, the messages that these images convey ultimately concern the concept of memory. Far from being 'tropes' devoid of importance, building representations carry a broad spectrum of messages to their patron and the beholder and, when examined in their context, may be crucial elements for our understanding of late antique culture.

57 M. Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 24–59 (esp. p. 42).

58 B. Bergmann, 'The Roman House as a Memory Theater', *ArtB*, 76.2 (1994): pp. 225–56.

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‘And the mother did not spare the baby at her breast’ or Searching for Meaning in Tecnoctonia and Tecnophagy

Dionysios Stathakopoulos

‘All deaths are bad enough but there is none so bad as famine’, the wasting away and slow decay brought on by pale hunger – as Homer put it at the beginning of European writing.¹ Images of hunger and starvation abound in texts since Antiquity. They suggest that for populations practising a subsistence economy without the means to control or manipulate natural phenomena, subsistence crises were inherent to the system of production and distribution. Such crises may have been very common, but relatively few of them were acute ones with increased mortality.² Here is Basil of Caesarea (c.330–79) in his homily ‘delivered in times of famine and drought’:

Hunger is a disease that torments with slowness, a pain that endures, a sickness that lasts, and is hidden in the bowels, a death that is always present and ever-lingering. ... The flesh becomes thin, and remains attached to the bones like a spider-web; the colour is lost entirely The knees no longer support, but shuffle because of the weight. The voice is weak and feeble; the eyes weakened and without their natural support in the cavities, sunken in the sockets like dried nuts in the sun. ... The torment of hunger forces many to cross the limits of nature, that is to feed on the bodies of people related by blood or friendship, and the mothers who give birth to children only to put them back into the womb with horror.³

1 Odys. XII 342, trans. S. Butler (London 1900) 155; the second part of the sentence uses the translation of the same verses by Alexander Pope (London, 1854), p. 208. The authority of this phrase is evident from the way it was taken up by authors throughout Late Antiquity, e.g., Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis* 7, PG 31:321; *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*: P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans* (2 vols, Paris, 1979), vol. 2, § 252.

2 For an overview of such phenomena see D.Ch. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire* (Aldershot, 2004), esp. chs 2 and 3.

3 Basil of Caesarea, *Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis*, PG 31:303D–328C (here 321A–D); trans. P. Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 27; see now the excellent

The crisis during which Basil gave this homily was not a dire one, but a climate-induced shortage; still he must have experienced starving rural populations in his lifetime and his experience will have coloured his account, even if he over-dramatized events for rhetorical emphasis. In a society where hunger was a constant danger, the threat or rather the possibility of resorting to any available food that might sustain one's life was certainly less sensational than it appears today. But mothers eating their own children?

Populations facing famine have been observed to react in similar patterns. Modern anthropological studies have made use of the triphasic stress model established by Selye in an effort to produce a diachronic typology of such reactions.⁴ They are divided into three phases: alarm, resistance and exhaustion.⁵ The first stage is characterized by hyperactivation, intensified interaction and a gradual increase of irritability leading to unrest. At first people are drawn together, sharing resources and putting perishable goods *en masse* on the market. As the food situation aggravates mass emigration and civil strife ensue as a result. In the stage of resistance, activity decreases and horizontal social ties loosen, as antagonism over diminishing resources grows and small groups seek alternative foodstuffs. When exhaustion sets in, personal survival becomes the uppermost priority as social ties collapse: the elderly are marginalized, children are often sold or abandoned. Individuals become aggressive or fall into a state of complete apathy.

It is obvious that the most serious concern of populations during such crises was to procure suitable food. During the onset of such periods the availability of staple foods was reduced as their prices rose, urging the lower economic strata to resort to alternative foodstuffs. As the situation aggravated, the part of the people who followed this practice grew larger and eventually whole communities overcame customary dietary taboos and consumed any edible substance that would sustain their life. There are various stages to such a process as there are also various groups of food that were consumed according to the degree of inhibition that had to be overcome to allow its consumption. These usually included inferior cereals or vegetables and animal fodder, livestock, not in ordinary circumstances destined for slaughter and/or carcasses, other natural products or non-foods as leather, shoes, hides, and human or animal excreta.⁶ In the most extreme cases, after all other alternative foodstuffs had

analysis of the text in S.R. Holman, *The Hungry are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia* (Oxford, 2001). See also Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr 21.

4 H. Selye, *The Stress of Life* (New York, 1956).

5 See R. Dirks, 'Social Responses during Severe Food Shortages and Famine', *Current Anthropology* 21 (1980): pp. 21–44 (esp. pp. 26–31).

6 The typology of these alternative foodstuffs, with some alterations and additions, is taken from P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World. Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 28.

been exhausted, populations occasionally broke the most serious dietary taboo and allegedly consumed human flesh.

The present study, based on incidents that occurred during times of severe famine, has two purposes. It seeks to present a body of data on cases of cannibalism and more specifically cases in which mothers are reported to have eaten their own children collected from the Mediterranean realm during the 'long' Late Antiquity that is up to the late seventh century. Second, it attempts to explore their potentially plural meanings, historicity being the most obvious among them and intertextuality being a less apparent but equally revealing aspect. To do this I will adopt two different approaches: I will look at the data accepting it at face value and then I will look at it critically undermining its historicity.

The first case took place in Rome in the course of late 408 to early 410 as the city lay besieged through Alaric. In order to put pressure on its inhabitants Alaric decided to starve them into surrender, by blocking the entrance of the river Tiber. The Romans soon were starving, but it seems that enough 'alternative foodstuffs' were still available in the city. As the siege lasted, however, even these foodstuffs, 'every abomination known to man' as Zosimus (*fl.* 490s–510s) put it, ran out. Finally 'The city was reduced to such distress that those who hoped to eat human flesh cried out in the circus – *pretium inpone carni humanae* – put a price on human flesh'.⁷ What Zosimus merely implies, is categorically stated by other sources as Philostorgios (368–c.439) and Sozomenos (c.400–450): the citizens resorted to cannibalism.⁸ Only one author, though, furnishes us with additional details: Saint Jerome (c.347–420), who, although living in Palestine at that time, had close friends and disciples in Rome. In Jerome's letter addressed to Principia, who along with her mother Marcella were among the besieged population, we read:

While these things were taking place in Jebus, a dreadful rumour reached us from the West. We heard that Rome was besieged, that the citizens were buying their safety with gold, and that when they had been thus despoiled they were again beleaguered, so as to lose not only their substance but their lives. The city which had taken the whole world was itself taken; nay, it fell by famine before it fell by the sword, and there were but a few to be made prisoners. The rage of hunger had recourse to impious food; men tore one another's limbs, and the mother did not spare the baby at her breast.⁹

7 Zosimos, *New History*, ed. F. Paschoud (Paris, 1989) vol. 5, VI 11, pp. 13–14; trans. R.T. Ridley (Sydney, 1982), p. 130.

8 Philostorgios, eds J. Bidez and F. Winkelmann (Berlin, 1972), XII 3, pp. 141–2; Sozomenos, eds J. Bidez and G.C. Hansen (Berlin, 1960), IX 8, 7–8, p. 400. See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr. 44.

9 Jerome, *Epistulae*, ed. J. Hilberg (Vienna, 1918), CXXVII 12–13, p. 154; Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr. 45; *Selected Letters of St Jerome*, trans. F.A. Wright (London and New York 1933), p. 463.

Around the same time Rome was being plundered by Alaric, the Visigoths entered and captured large parts of Spain. Among the ravages of war and catastrophe an apocalyptic mood was imminent. The Spanish bishop Hydatius (c.400–469) records the events as follows:

As the Barbarians ran wild through Spain and the deadly pestilence continued on its savage course, the wealth and goods stored in the cities were plundered by the tyrannical tax-collector and consumed by the soldiers. A famine ran riot, so dire that driven by hunger human beings devoured human flesh; mothers too feasted upon the bodies of their own children whom they had killed and cooked with their own hands.¹⁰

More than a century later we encounter another case of *tecnophagy*. It allegedly occurred during a siege-induced famine in Liguria in the winter of 537/38 in the course of Justinian's Gothic Wars. Our source is Datius (died 552), Archbishop of Milan and his account is found in the *Liber Pontificalis*. In a vague manner he states that 'in some parts of the region women ate their own children because of the famine'.¹¹ A much later author, Paul the Deacon (c.720–800) spices it up by specifying that 'mothers consumed parts of their unfortunate offspring'.¹² The same two sources, the *Liber Pontificalis* and Paul retell, more or less, the same story this time concerning the dire famine that broke out during the siege of Rome by Totila in 545/46.¹³ It is interesting that Prokopios (*fl.* 530s–50s), a contemporary author, who had access to first-hand information of the events, as secretary of the commanding general Belisarius (although it is unsure whether he was in Italy in that period),¹⁴ and who has no difficulty in recording the practice of cannibalism as such,¹⁵ does not mention this fact, although he does describe in the darkest colours the devastation that the famine brought on:

The famine, becoming more severe as time went on, was greatly increasing its ravages driving men to discover monstrous foods unknown to the natural desires of man. ... And if any man had a horse or any other animal which had died, this Roman was counted among those exceedingly fortunate, seeing that he was able to live luxuriously upon the flesh of a dead animal. But all the rest of the numerous inhabitants were eating nettles only, such as grow in abundance

10 R.W. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana. Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 82–3; Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr. 46.

11 *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne (2 vols, Paris, 1886), vol. 1, LX, p. 291.

12 Paul the Deacon, *Historia Romana*, ed. H. Droysen (Berlin, 1879), XVI, 18, p. 222; Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr. 95.

13 *Liber Pontificalis* LXI 7, p. 298; Paul the Deacon, *Historia Romana*, XVI 22, p. 224; Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr. 123.

14 A. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985), p. 14.

15 Prokopios, *Wars*, eds J. Haury and G. Wirth (7 vols, Leipzig, 1963), vol. 2, III 16, 2–3, p. 363. Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr. 122.

about the walls and among the ruins in all parts of the city. ... And now they were even beginning to eat each other's dung. There were many too, who committed suicide because of the pressure of famine; for they could no longer find either dogs or mice or any dead animal of any kind on which to feed.¹⁶

It is important to notice that such incidents of child-eating are also recorded in narratives that are situated outside the Graeco-roman tradition. One of the earliest is found in the work entitled *Riṣ Mellē* (A summary of world history) of the late seventh-century Nestorian monk and author John Bar Penkaye (fl. late seventh century). It concerns the eye-witness account of a period of severe crisis in the region of Mesopotamia, during which famine, epidemics and warfare decimated the population. This text is of a distinct eschatological tone – in accordance with other contemporary, mostly pseudo-epigraphical texts of apocalyptic character (as Pseudo-Methodios) that tried to come to terms with the Arabic invasion and the devastation that accompanied it. All known catastrophes are included in John's register; among them figures prominently infanticide with subsequent cannibalism:

Again the very hands of compassionate mothers have boiled up their children to serve as food. ... Many a mother made her children into food: sometimes in the evening she might be sleeping with her children, but in the morning their lives had been put to a silent end.¹⁷

Summarizing the findings so far we can isolate the following common points: firstly the narrative trait of mothers killing and eating their own children is present throughout Late Antiquity, in Greek, Latin and Syriac texts. Secondly, these cases occur during sieges or general warfare. Thirdly, the authors that have made use of it were in one way or another connected to the Church and thus can be expected to have been familiar with a specific canon of theological texts.

Cannibalism constitutes one of the greatest taboos of human behaviour. When confronted with this sensational phenomenon in both past and present scholars are often at a loss, torn between complete rejection and unconditional acceptance. As is often the case, we can expect to do justice to the phenomenon by adopting a subtler reading that is positioned between these extreme poles. Cannibalism can be generally divided in two major categories: customary (or ritual) and occasional (or survival). The first category includes those cases of eating human flesh that have been postulated in prehistoric and archaic communities as well as those that have been observed and recorded among natural tribes by travellers and subsequently by anthropologists. Popular images

16 Prokopios, *Wars*, III 17, 9–20, pp. 371–2; Procopius, *The wars*, trans. H.B. Dewing (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1942), pp. 297–301; Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr 123.

17 John Bar Penkaye, *Riṣ Mellē*: S. Brock, 'North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John Bar Penkaye's *Riṣ Mellē*', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1989): XV 163 p. 70; Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, Nr 194.

of cannibalism have sprung mostly from this category. They have developed an afterlife as myths and have replenished the western collective consciousness up to today. There is a strong scholarly body of work that denies such cases any historicity and an equally strong one that strives to prove the opposite.¹⁸ The actions of certain sociopath individuals, notably serial killers that kill and consume their victims, may also be perceived – in the larger sense – as pertaining to customary or ritual cannibalism. This has also become a prominent trait of mass-culture products, as films and advertisement, but its study should be the object of psychiatry or cultural anthropology rather than history.

The second category, occasional or survival cannibalism, is the only one that is universal, both in time and space, and undeniably historic. It occurs, as a rule, in the face of dire hunger and has been linked with human history from its beginnings up to our day. Hunger-induced cannibalism constitutes an act of transcendence of customary dietary restrictions or taboos as a result of the diminution of the sense of aversion in the midst of famine. According to Sigmund Freud the feeling of hunger is one of the ego-instincts, as opposed to the object-oriented libido. He identified the former type of impulses with the so-called death-instincts, primeval inner forces that lead the individual to destruction, to its return to the inorganic state. He considered these instincts as more primitive than those connected with libido and as such responsible for acts of seemingly blind impetus that can often have catastrophic results for the individual.¹⁹

In a daring essay the ethnopsychiatrist Georges Devereux wrote of the cannibalistic impulses of parents.²⁰ He identified a link between the frequent cases of female animals who have just given birth and eat the afterbirth, often not stopping until they devour some of the young as well and an impulse to do the same in humans, which, however, has been culturally transformed in

18 From the growing body of literature that rejects any historical accounts on cannibalism among primitive societies as fiction: W. Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth* (Oxford, 1979); E. Frank, 'Sie fressen Menschen, wie ihr scheußliches Aussehen beweist ...', in: H.P. Duerr (ed.), *Authentizität und Betrug in der Ethnologie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), pp. 199–224; H. Peter-Röcher, *Mythos Menschenfresser: Ein Blick in die Kochtöpfe der Kannibalen* (Munich, 1998). The opposite tendency is effectively argued for by anthropologists in such books as: L.R. Goldman (ed.), *The Anthropology of Cannibalism* (Westport, London, 1999); P. Brown and D. Tuzin (eds), *The Ethnography of Cannibalism* (Washington, DC, 1983).

19 S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, new trans. J. Strachey (London and New York, 1961; first ed. London 193), pp. 71–5. I am well aware of the criticism that Freud's body of work has received especially since the 1970s (see, for example, the introduction entitled 'The Anti-Freudian Mood' in P. Robinson's, *Freud and his Critics* [Berkeley, 1993], pp. 1–17). Nevertheless I consider his notion of the death-instinct as one of the few attempts to shed light on hunger as a psychological phenomenon, an interpretation that, in my mind, still holds. Even critics that deal with the specific theory of the death-instinct have not in fact been able to procure arguments against its existence and the mechanisms ascribed to it by Freud: K. Reiter, *Der König ist nackt. Eine Kritik an Sigmund Freud* (Vienna, 1996), pp. 129–31.

20 G. Devereux, 'The Cannibalistic Impulses of Parents', in *Basic Problems of Ethnopsychiatry* (Chicago and London, 1980), pp. 122–37 (esp. pp. 125–30).

the form of projection. He does not specify which forms this projection could take, but a distant echo may perhaps be found in that overused phrase so often addressed to small children (and not only by their mothers): 'you're so lovely, I could eat you'.

The above theories were, as a rule, formulated without any basis in verifiable contemporary accounts. In fact, browsing through more recent historical records of mothers killing and eating their children I have only managed to find two cases: one during the siege of Messolonghi in the Greek war of Independence in 1826,²¹ and another in the trail of the Donner Party, a group of pioneers who got lost and trapped by bad weather in the mountains of Utah in the winter of 1846/47.²² In both instances, however, the mothers had allegedly consumed their already dead infants. As it seems corroboration of the cases of *tecnoctonia* and *tecnophagy* in Late Antiquity will not come from merely juxtaposing it with modern evidence for such a practice. Does this mean that corroboration cannot be found, because such events never occurred?

A different approach to these cases would be to view them not as fact, but as a literary motif. With their common traits in mind, one can investigate, whether this narrative complex is to be found in other, older, influential texts.

In the vast motif-index compiled by Stith Thompson there is indeed a large number of examples referring to mothers eating their children.²³ The material from which this collection is compiled is fairly recent, but it is possible that they partly represent ancient preoccupations with the subject, re-worked into the form of myths, parables and folk-tales. Perhaps, however, there are more normative texts at play here, ones that have a proven and close relationship to the Christian Greek culture that is the backbone of Byzantine literature.

Two Biblical pericopes fit this role quite well. The first instances are found in Deuteronomy; they are curses against those who disobey the Lord's commands:

And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee (28:53.30). And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates (28:57.34).

21 A. Mathaiou, 'Διατιητικές απαγορεύσεις στην Τουρκοκρατία', *Ιστορικά* 21 (1994): p. 265 – based on the eye-witness account of Artemios Michos, one of the military commanders of the city: A. Michos, *Άπομνημονεύματα τής δευτέρας πολιορκίας του Μεσολογγίου (1825–1826) και τινές άλλαι σημειώσεις εις τήν ιστορίαν του μεγάλου Αγώνος*, ed. S. P. Arabantinos (Athens, 1883), pp. 57–8, n. 2.

22 G.R. Stewart, *Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party* (Boston and New York, 1963 suppl. ed.), pp. 244–5.

23 S. Thompson, *Motif-index of folk literature* (6 vols, Indiana, 1934–55), G61, G72, G72.1, K2116.II, N325.2.

The second passage refers to the siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 6:28–30 in the late ninth century BCE. Here's what a woman tells king Joram:

This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

The passages combine all the elements that are present in the narratives we have discussed: warfare, a state of siege, a severe famine and ultimately the people's resort to cannibalism and especially to the eating of their own children by their mothers. These incidents of infanticide and cannibalism carry powerful metaphorical connotations. Giving life to a child and then taking it away signifies a reversal of the binary couple in and out: a child comes out of the womb and is returned to it through consumption.²⁴ Given the tremendous authority of biblical texts for the mentality and the textual tradition of the Byzantine world, we should not overlook the fact that these passages could have, and probably did function as a model for cannibalism narratives. It provided later authors with a set of authoritative images that were certain to bring up connotations of the biblical archetype to their text and subsequently to their audience.

Another text, however, functioned as a mediator between the Old Testament and Christian authors as attested by its wide use in both Greek and Latin texts throughout the Middle Ages. In a passage of his *Jewish War*, Flavius Josephus (c.37–100) narrates the following story. I quote, omitting certain short passages:

There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan, her name was Mary; she was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time. The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon. What she had treasured up besides, as also what food she had contrived to save, had been also carried off by the rapacious guards, who came every day running into her house for that purpose; and if she found any food, she perceived her labors were for others, and not for herself; and it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food, while the famine pierced through her very bowels and marrow, when also her passion was fired to a degree beyond the famine itself; nor did she consult with any thing but with her passion and the necessity she was in. She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, 'O thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve

24 For an excellent study of this binary couple: M. Kilgour, *From Communion to Cannibalism: an Anatomy of Metaphors of Incorporation* (Princeton, 1990); on images of the child returning to the mother's womb, now termed a tomb, see the excellent article by R.J. Macrides, 'Poetic Justice in the Patriarchate. Murder and Cannibalism in the Provinces', in L. Burgmann, M.T. Fögen and A. Schmink (eds), *Cupido Legum* (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), pp. 137–68, which touches on a number of similar subjects. I would like to thank the author for sharing her thoughts with me on this topic long after the publication of her work.

thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves. This famine also will destroy us, even before that slavery comes upon us. Yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a by-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.' As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed.²⁵

Two important features about this passage should be emphasized: Firstly Josephus made extensive use of the Bible for his work – therefore, he was well aware of the instances of cannibalism reported therein. Secondly, what is more important for our discussion is the aforementioned extensive use of this particular passage by Byzantine and other Christian authors. To name but a few, we find it in Eusebios (c.264–340), Basil of Caesarea (as quoted at the beginning of this paper), Jerome, Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), John of Damascus (c.675–749) – and later authors such as Photios (c.820–91), George Kedrenos (fl. second half of eleventh century), John Zonaras (fl. first half of twelfth century), Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) and Jacobus de Voragine (c.1230–98).²⁶ Josephus was seen as a bridge between the New Testament and the Christian centuries that ensued; the early adoption by Eusebius of his text ensured his importance and centrality in later authors.²⁷

There are different ways in explaining this textual dependency. One would be to assume that the cases of cannibalism in the Byzantine sources did not occur and the authors included them in their narrative as a means of dramatic emphasis – what would be more dramatic than a mother killing and eating her own child? In this case the Biblical borrowing, mediated through Josephus is a means to use a well-known and authoritative example of what happened in a period of warfare and famine. Julia Marvin, looking at the use of the Bible and Josephus in medieval English texts, suggests that such a use was about explaining and conceptualizing the events of the past as experienced by the later authors and inserting their contemporary events in the grander scheme of the divine plan.²⁸ A different point of view would be to suppose that these cases of cannibalism did occur. While it is highly unlikely that the information available to the authors was as similar as their accounts make it to be, it is,

25 Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, VI 201–13; *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. W. Whiston (6 vols, New York, 1824), vol. 6, pp. 92–3.

26 On Josephus' use by later authors see the magisterial study by H. Schrekenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter* (Leiden, 1972). The work includes an exhaustive list of authors who refer to Josephus in their work. On the use of the passage on Mary and her son see p. 190.

27 L.H. Feldman, 'A selective critical bibliography of Josephus', in L.H. Feldman and G. Hata (eds), *Josephus, the Bible, and History* (Detroit, 1989), pp. 445–7.

28 J. Marvin, 'Cannibalism as an Aspect of Famine in Two English Chronicles', in M. Carlin and J.T. Rosenthal. (eds), *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe* (London and Rio Grande, 1998), pp. 73–86 (here 79).

nevertheless, probable that the information they obtained was general and non-specific, because the act of cannibalism did and does create a shocking sensation. As it constitutes a small-scale event that usually occurs within an enclosed community in times of severe crisis there are only rarely available reports from eye-witnesses. Why then did these authors revert to the adoption of a motif? A Wittgensteinian impasse – if you pardon the neologism.²⁹ Allow me to digress. Let us begin by accepting Ludwig Wittgenstein's maxims: 'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world' and 'We cannot say what we cannot think'.³⁰ When faced with events that are abominable and unspeakable authors may be at a loss of language to describe them. In order to do so, is it not easier to revert to the soothing undercurrent of stereotype, to reproducing readily available images and phrases rather than stretching the limits of his semantic capabilities to find new ones? Robert Calasso, who breathed new life into ancient Greek myths – including those that refer to tecnophagy (Kronos, Atreus, Tantalos), has a similar understanding: '... the realm of the unique is the world that always eludes the clutches of language, the very appearing of the irrepeatable'.³¹ Actual observations that are recorded and constitute a break with these ancient narrative traditions provide us with frightening descriptions of cannibalism. In the famine that gripped Athens under occupation by the Germans in the winter of 1941/42 an eye-witness recorded the scene of the body of a dead girl, whose left thigh was missing: 'it was cut so orderly that someone must have undoubtedly cut it with a knife'.³² Another example comes from the well-known case of survival-cannibalism that occurred when a plane crashed in the Andes in 1972. On the tenth day after long deliberations between the survivors and while supplies had almost run out one of them went out in the snow:

Most of the bodies were covered by snow, but the buttocks of one protruded a few yards from the plane. ... Canessa knelt, bared the skin, and cut into the flesh with a piece of broken glass. It was frozen hard and difficult to cut, but he persisted until he had cut away 20 slivers the size of matchsticks.

29 In analogy to a Malthusian or demographic trap or impasse: *A Dictionary of Public Health*, J.M. Last (ed.) (Oxford, 2007), accessed online 14 March 2009: 'The situation that arises in a country or region when the population exceeds the carrying capacity of its local ecosystem, there is nowhere for the people to go, and the economy produces insufficient goods or services to exchange for food and other essentials. The consequences include famine requiring food aid, migration out of the affected region, epidemics, and violent armed conflict.'

30 L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears, B. McGuinness, (London, 2001, rev. ed.) 5.6 and 5.6.1, p. 68.

31 R. Calasso, *The marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (London, 1993), p. 137.

32 Ph. Skouras, A. Chatzedemos, A. Kaloutsos and G. Papademetriou, *Η ψυχοπαθολογία της πείνας, του φόβου και του άγχους* (Athens, 1947, reprint 1991), p. 348, n. 1. This work was written by four neurologists and psychiatrists active in hospitals during the occupation; it is largely based on a vast corpus of anonymously submitted written replies to questionnaires that they collected.

He then ... placed them on the roof [of the plane]. ... The hand rose and pushed the meat into his mouth. He swallowed it. ... Zerbino took a strip and swallowed it as Canessa had done, but it stuck into his throat. He scooped a handful of snow into his mouth and managed to wash it down.³³

These are new and harrowing images of cannibalism; their technical details – that is, in our particular context – their breaking free of the Wittgensteinian impasse is what makes them so distressing. But does the fact that late antique authors shied away from doing the same render their narratives unreliable? Does the proved existence of a strong model motif signify that these late antique cases of infanticide and cannibalism are merely fiction? Ultimately this is almost a question of our individual understanding of human nature and what it is or is not capable of doing. We cannot be certain that these late antique mothers killed and ate their own children in times of dire famine. But maybe this particular question is not the most central one. Perhaps it is important to dwell on the supposed antithesis between topos and fact and consider whether these two may not be mutually exclusive. In my opinion people undoubtedly resorted to cannibalism under extreme conditions of famine and starvation. The information trickled down to our authors who made the choice to dramatize it by using a well-known and powerful motif: even the mothers, whose instincts, we would like to believe, would be to sacrifice their own lives for the survival of their children, did the opposite and killed and ate their own offspring. But again this would mean to overlook the psychological and moral breakdown inflicted by starvation. In a state of torpor mothers who took away the bread rations of their children indifferent to the deprivation of their offspring have been observed.³⁴ Perhaps the distance between such behaviour and that of the sources discussed above is less great than we would care to think.

The remoteness between our world and that of Late Antiquity when it comes to hunger and starvation is vast. As Piero Camporesi put it: '... the horror for anthropophagy and patrophagy becomes ever more consistent the more western European society is spared the pangs of hunger'.³⁵

Our search for meaning has expectedly shown how elusive and fleeting both the quest and its object can be. Already the fact of putting together cases whose supposed similarities make them susceptible to a joint analysis is telling: as Foucault has shown this quest for a typological investigation probably reveals more about us than the past.³⁶ The above cases looked from across the

33 P.P. Read, *Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors* (New York, 1974), pp. 78–9.

34 Skouras et al., *Ψυχοπαθολογία*, p. 348.

35 Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams*, p. 53.

36 'The Birth of a World', interview with M. Foucault (first published in *Le Monde des Livres*, 3 May 1969), in: S. Lotringer (ed.), *Foucault Live, Collected Interviews, 1961–1984* (New York, 1989), pp. 65–7. The main books by Foucault alluded to are *The Order of Things* (London, 1970) and the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London, 1972).

millennial gap that separates us from them could make us ask: if you are what you eat, what are you if you eat your children? We are regarding people as they are coping with distressing events and trying to report them accurately, one hopes, but at the same time feeling the burden of genre. Humans cannot escape their own context, mostly because there are limits as to how much of it they can consciously apprehend. The above can be read as an exercise in making such limitations visible.

The Anxiety of Images: Meanings and Material Objects

Averil Cameron

Leslie Brubaker is one of the most powerful of the contextual art historians to whom historians of Byzantium have been deeply indebted since the 1980s. Her doctoral thesis, written under the supervision of Herbert Kessler, and published as an important book in 1999,¹ had been completed in 1983 and from the later 1980s onwards her work demonstrated the debt to contextual approaches which she has herself identified as influencing Byzantine art history.² Not only context, but also perception, 'ways of seeing', the relation between word and image, and reception are central to her work, and nowhere more so than in her subtle and complex expositions of Byzantine cultural production in the ninth century.³ Cultural history, or cultural studies, is the realm within which many late antique and some Byzantine historians who make explicit use of critical theory now place themselves, and Brubaker has herself seemed to be moving in this direction, especially in her direct confrontation of the problems surrounding the topics of material culture and gender.⁴ Yet the uncompromising emphasis which she places on material culture – objects as objects – in her book co-authored with John Haldon on the sources for Byzantium in the iconoclast era (not, we are to understand,

1 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999).

2 L. Brubaker, 'Critical approaches to art history, in E. Jeffreys, with J. Haldon and R. Cormack (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 59–66 (at p. 62).

3 L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* (Aldershot, 1998); *eadem* (ed.), 'Byzantine art in the ninth century: theory, practice, and culture', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 13 (1989): pp. 23–93; *eadem*, 'Perception and conception: art, theory and culture in ninth-century Byzantium', *Word and Image* 5.1 (1989): pp. 19–32.

4 L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850): The Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), which is divided into two parts, entitled 'Material Culture' and 'the Written Sources'; *idem*, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680–850)* (Cambridge: 2010). For gender see L. Brubaker and J. Smith (eds), *Gender in Society, 300–900* (Cambridge, 2004).

the sources for 'Iconoclasm', in the usual rather loose terminology) seems at first sight to stand in a relationship of tension with her equally magisterial insistence on the need for exegesis when dealing with Byzantine art, an art which cannot, after all, simply be allowed to speak for itself. At least, that is true for a high percentage of the religious art of Byzantium, which is replete with meanings and messages drawn from a complex and sometimes contested body of doctrine and belief – and the religious art of Byzantium itself occupies an extremely prominent place within the surviving body of Byzantine visual art. This contribution, written by a historian who has had good reason to learn from Brubaker's work, asks whether such a tension is inevitable, and how the two ways of looking can coexist.⁵

As always, there is the problem of which words to use. 'Material culture' is a term which excludes; it suggests objects without their meanings, though of course we know from anthropology that all objects are invested with meaning. To include icons in the category of material culture, that is, the very kind of religious objects whose meanings were to be so contested, seems to represent a deliberate choice to demythologize them, indeed to make them into 'sources', almost as if they are being assigned to the status of the building blocks of positivist history. This should admittedly be qualified by noting that the phrase 'the Iconoclast era' in the book's title sets its chronological starting point firmly at AD 680, and that the section on icons is strictly limited to images or textual references assigned by the author to that period, without attempting to give a general survey of material other scholars might have wanted to include. Nevertheless the strictness of approach, and its presentation of icons as 'sources', seems to stand apart from the general tendency of Brubaker's work, and therefore to be all the more interesting and worth exploring.

We find Brubaker on several occasions opposing the conventional view of a 'rise of icons' in the late sixth century⁶ and promoting the idea that they became important, that is, acquired a special status, only substantially later. This statement needs finessing: 'relic-icons' of Christ do 'appear in the third quarter of the sixth century', but miraculous icons of the Virgin 'come into play only in the tenth century'.⁷ The term 'icon' in the phrase 'rise of icons' also needs

5 The bibliography on icons and iconoclasm is literally vast and constantly growing; I can aim here only to give pointers.

6 The classic expression of the conventional view is that by E. Kitzinger, 'The cult of images in the age before Iconoclasm', *DOP* 8 (1954): pp. 83–150, incorporating what Brubaker calls 'the Kitzinger model'.

7 L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham, 'Byzantine veneration of the *Theotokos*: icons, relics and eighth-century homilies', in H. Amirav and B. ter Haar Romeny (eds), *From Rome to Constantinople. Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron* (Leuven, Paris and Dudley, Massachusetts, 2007), pp. 235–50 (at p. 250), citing B.V. Pencheva, 'The supernatural protector of Constantinople: the Virgin and her icons in the tradition of the Avar siege', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26 (2002): pp. 2–41, and *eadem*, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2006). Brubaker has revisited the formulation in

to be unpacked: which icons are intended, those of Christ, or the Virgin, or images of the saints, and what kinds of image? What makes an image an icon – seemingly, for Brubaker, when it is associated with a cult, or when it is believed to perform miracles?⁸ Further, the term ‘relic-icons’ alludes to a complementary position, namely that relics preceded icons in attracting religious importance: as Brubaker put it in an earlier and classic paper, ‘the holy portrait became transparent – a window through which one could reach the saint depicted – in the last quarter of the seventh century, and especially in the last two decades of that century’, while ‘even then’ not replacing ‘visions, visitations and relics’.⁹ The argument relies significantly on the assumption that references to apparent cult images in pre-late seventh-century texts are in fact interpolated: ‘though in some cases the jury is still out, many of the basic accounts upon which the Kitzinger model rests are now generally accepted as later interpolations into earlier texts’.¹⁰ For her, such references include those in the *Spiritual Meadow* of John Moschos and the *Miracles of Cosmas and Damian*, as well as the *Miracles of Artemius* from the seventh century.¹¹ We have certainly come in recent years to recognize the extraordinary extent of textual manipulation that went on during the Iconoclast period in order to manufacture appropriate evidence for the iconophile case, but a word of caution is perhaps in order when we see that Brubaker herself recognizes the extreme paucity of the evidence. Furthermore, while she is undoubtedly right to call into question the Kitzinger model of a seamless ‘rise’ in the attention given to religious images from about AD 550, which culminated in the excesses to which the iconoclasts objected, the sheer complexities of the textual evidence, and the extent of later revision, which could (though it did not always) include actual interpolation, mean that alternative generalizations are also difficult and that every individual example has to be taken on its own terms. The Brubaker model, if we may call it that, is equally linear, in that relics (which for her include *acheiropoietai* images of Christ) precede icons, with the consequence that if the latter only develop their cult status in the late seventh century, a different narrative of Iconoclasm will be needed.¹² It is also a model that relies on a very specific understanding of

her Introduction to R. Ousterhout and L. Brubaker (eds), *The Sacred Image. East and West* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 1–24. An icon of Christ was indeed processed on the walls, even if not one of the Virgin, as often stated; for a succinct analysis see C. Mango, ‘Constantinople as Theotokoupolis’, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Athens and Milan, 2000), pp. 17–25 (at pp. 21–2).

8 L. Brubaker, ‘Icons before Iconoclasm’, in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo*, XLV *Settimane internazionale di studi sull’alto Medioevo* (Spoleto, 1998), pp. 1215–54 (at p. 1218).

9 Ibid., p. 1251.

10 Ibid., pp. 1219, 1224.

11 Ibid., p. 1239 (‘heavily interpolated’).

12 The Brubaker view is described as ‘rather radical’ by G. Wolf, ‘Icons and sites’, in Maria Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 23–49 (at p. 26).

what makes an icon an icon, when as we know the Greek word *eikon* is about as unspecific as a word can be.

Without contesting either Brubaker's general health warning against Kitzinger, her emphasis on relics, or the danger of failing to appreciate how often texts of this period were in fact interpolated to make them suit later purposes, I will try here to suggest a broader way of understanding the religious developments before Iconoclasm, and one which depends less on a small and at times dubious repertoire of particular stories and relates more widely to a broader range of general religious questions and sensibilities in the period in question. At the same time I want to take up a further theme illuminated by Brubaker, that of text and image,¹³ and to argue that they cannot be separated from each other. However contextual their approach, art historians will necessarily start from the material objects, but all of us, art historians included, have to try as best we can to use what evidence there is, whether texts, archaeology, liturgy, theology or material evidence; there can be few periods where this is more necessary than that of the late sixth to eighth centuries in the Byzantine east, when a lack of surviving material and written evidence alike is combined with very great difficulty in interpreting the material we do have, and when contemporaries were engaged in ever more complex and divisive theological argument, at the very time when large areas of the eastern empire were lost and the capital itself coming near to capture in not just one, but a series of desperate sieges. We do not have to resort to a simple functionalism to argue that questioning, and the search for reassurance and meaning, were inevitable responses in these dire circumstances. As saints' relics became important, so it was also natural to depict the saints themselves in visual art or to imagine them in stories. Furthermore, and at a deeper level, the theological arguments of the sixth and seventh centuries can themselves be seen as leading to an appeal to the visual appearance of saints and their appearances in dreams as a guaranteeing access to truth. What seems to have been happening 'on the ground' and surfaces in passing references in several mainly early seventh-century texts, was, by a parallel process which we cannot document in detail, taken up and incorporated as a theme in the highly intellectualized discourse of theological debate which was such a feature of Byzantine society. Texts, with their occasional indications of how individuals thought and behaved in relation to holy persons and their images, go together with what we can discover about actual objects. In bringing both these elements together into a wider view we need to consider, if only briefly here, the broader evidence for images before the late seventh century; the

13 On this currently much discussed theme see e.g. L. James (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 2007); A. Eastmond and L. James (eds), *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium. Studies presented to Robin Cormack* (Aldershot, 2003).

evidence for questioning and doubt, the appeal to images for verification, and the meaning to be given to 'cult' in this context.

To start with doubt: the well-known canon 82 of the Council in Trullo (AD 691–92) forbidding the depiction of Christ as a lamb and ordaining that he must be depicted as a man, relates to a theological emphasis on the divine suffering in the flesh and to the recent condemnation of Monothelite doctrine by the Sixth Council,¹⁴ but it also betrays an anxiety about the relation of the divine figure to his depiction, with the added implication that representations of Christ are in a special category because they must show the truth. This thinking has been explored in a fine article by Gilbert Dagron,¹⁵ who points out that in the early seventh-century *Life* of Theodore of Sykeon the saints Cosmas and Damian appear to Theodore as they do 'in their cult images' (the word used is *latreia*), and other texts relate visions or dreams of saints which are authenticated for the viewer because they look like their pictures;¹⁶ how else after all would the dreamer recognize the saint? Gilbert Dagron has called this 'the hagiographic topos of recognition'.¹⁷ It was evidently not enough that the saint announced himself by name: the resemblance to a familiar image acted as an extra layer of verification. Out of this background grew the intense discussion during the iconoclast period of how Christ himself could be depicted at all, and what was the exact relation between image and prototype. Soon enough, the rival claims of words and images came under scrutiny, and taking this to extremes, iconophiles could argue that icons, as visual images, were more truthful than words.¹⁸ In another fine article Dagron has given a memorable impression of the religious anxieties of the day,¹⁹ which there is no need to repeat here. Suffice it to say that a whole range of texts, from collections of miracles associated with a particular shrine and theological treatises to sets of questions and answers on theological topics or matters of religious practice, and doubts expressed about nature of saintly apparitions and the fate of souls after death, suggest a lively debate about the status of the saints out of which the reforming iconoclast zeal emerged. It is worth citing Dagron: 'le problème des images n'est que le symbole de divergences plus profondes sur des croyances, un heritage culturel, un partage du sacré et du profane, le

14 Discussion in C. Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton and Oxford, 2002), pp. 40–54; see also A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986).

15 G. Dagron, 'Holy images and likeness', *DOP* 45 (1991): pp. 23–33 (esp. 31).

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

18 See Barber, *Figure and Likeness*, pp. 125–37; J.-M. Sansterre, 'La parole, le texte et l'image selon les auteurs byzantins des époques iconoclastes et posticonoclastes', in *Testo e immagine nel alto Medioevo*, *XLI Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto, 1994), pp. 197–240.

19 G. Dagron, 'L'ombre d'un doute: l'hagiographie en question, VIe–XIe siècle', *DOP* 46 (1992): pp. 59–68.

rôle social et économique de l'Église, tous sujets au coeur desquels se trouve également le mode d'action des saints'.²⁰ Within this body of material we find some references to images, sometimes almost *en passant*, sometimes with a more specific role, and while some of these may indeed be later interpolations by writers keen to justify the iconophile position, the impression remains that when a story appears with an appeal to an image, its purpose is usually to provide extra verification, and to bolster the existing argument of the text. Similarly we find mention of icons appearing in the anti-Jewish texts of the seventh century – for the first time, as shown by V. Déroche, in the *Apology* of Leontius of Neapolis from the mid-seventh century.²¹ The context is that of the allegation that Christians venerated created objects, that is that they practised idolatry, and icons make their appearance as one of the recipients of this Christian veneration, thus again prefiguring one of the main themes of the first phase of iconoclast-iconophile argument.

The period from the mid sixth century to the end of the seventh was a time of crucial change for the eastern empire. Justinian's Council of AD 553 marked a huge but unsuccessful effort by the imperial regime to hold the church together; its reception in Italy was frosty, and the concessions it made towards Miaphysites in the east failed to prevent them from separating from Constantinople.²² Justinian's successor Justin II (565–78) tried persecution, and Herakleios (610–41) was attempting to establish common ground with the Armenians even while engaged on his campaign with Persia. The sack of Jerusalem and capture of Syria, Palestine and Egypt by the Persians gave rise to a frenzy of ideological and religious activity, during which Christian hostility to Jews intensified. The lifting of the siege of Constantinople by the Avars and Persians in 626 was widely attributed to the protection of the Virgin; however, two major Arab sieges followed, the first in the 670s and the second in 717, and Constantinople was lucky indeed to escape. Meanwhile Herakleios had tried to impose a new formula for religious unity. Monothelitism was energetically opposed by Sophronios (bishop of Jerusalem, 634–38) and other eastern clerics but remained in place until the Sixth Council of AD 680–81, and brought about the deaths of Pope Martin (653) and eventually of Maximus Confessor (662). By the end of the seventh century the Umayyad caliphate was a well-established state whose ruler was in a position to make a clear assertion of the superiority of Islam over Christianity. Economically and militarily the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

²¹ V. Déroche, 'L'authenticité de l'Apologie contre les Juifs de Léontios de Neapolis', *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 110 (1986): pp. 655–69.

²² For this see now V. L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church* (Oxford, 2008); for the circumstances which led to Constantinople II: C. Chazelle and C. Cubitt (eds), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: the Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2007), and R. Price, *The Acts of Constantinople 553* (2 vols, Liverpool, 2009).

eastern empire was in such straits that it seemed as if it could not survive and serious thought was allegedly given to abandoning Constantinople. These upheavals also divided the church, and in the provinces which were now under Arab rule the Christian populations, themselves divided and cut off from Constantinople, turned to prophecy and apocalyptic. Not least, the disturbed conditions created an acute pastoral need which we can see clearly reflected in the question and answer literature of the period.

It is with this background in mind that we should consider the evidence for religious images before Iconoclasm. It falls into several different classes: surviving or definitely known icons, references to images 'not made with hands' (*acheiropoietai*), allusions in contemporary written sources, and the wider range of religious images in mosaic, fresco or other media in addition to the panel paintings on wood to which the term is usually applied nowadays. If we confine the term 'icons' to the latter, and look only for specific indications of cult, for instance veneration paid to the icon, or miraculous powers allegedly possessed by it, and we exclude as effectively relics the class of supposed *acheiropoietai*,²³ then we can agree with Brubaker that icon veneration in the sense attacked by the iconoclasts is at least a seventh-century, if not a later seventh-century phenomenon.

Admittedly, few early or possibly early examples survive, and then not from Constantinople itself. The key examples are the early icons from Saint Catherine's monastery on Sinai, and the several early icons of the Virgin which still survive in Rome.²⁴ The *acheiropoietai* of the late sixth century – the Mandyllion of Edessa, the image of Camuliana, and the image on linen at Memphis recorded by the Piacenza pilgrim, who says that he and his companions venerated it (*adoravimus*) – no longer exist.²⁵ The extent of icon veneration in the narrower sense in the late sixth century has no doubt been exaggerated, though an explanation is still needed for these *acheiropoietai*, and it is surely significant that an icon of Christ was paraded during the siege of 626.²⁶ Rather than separating relics and icons in terms of cult, we should perhaps see them as different aspects of a broad development.

According to one scholar, writing about medieval painting, Byzantine iconoclasm 'was precipitated by painted images'.²⁷ But this is too limited:

23 See Brubaker, 'Icons before Iconoclasm', pp. 1228–31.

24 Sinai: *ibid.*, p. 1216, also referring to 'many' holy portraits attested in written sources but no longer extant; see also J.C. Anderson, 'The Byzantine panel portrait before and after Iconoclasm', in Ousterhout and Brubaker (eds), *The Sacred Image. East and West*, pp. 25–44 (at pp. 28–30). Rome: P. Amato (ed.), *De vera effigie Mariae. Antiche icone Romane* (Milan and Rome, 1988); Wolf, 'Icons and sites'; G. Wolf, *Salus populi romani. Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter* (Weinheim, 1990).

25 Brubaker, pp. 1222–23, 1227–31.

26 See Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', pp. 21–2, with sceptical comments about the degree of religious change in the late sixth century.

27 Anderson, 'The Byzantine panel portrait before and after Iconoclasm', p. 25.

painted panels were by no means the only kind of religious images. The Virgin was already appearing on seals in the third quarter of the sixth century, clear evidence of personal religion, and new Marian churches needed decoration;²⁸ there were mosaics and frescoes, as in church apses, some of which the iconoclasts saw fit to whitewash, not to mention ivories and images in other media. Panel paintings were not the only target, and the issues surrounding likeness and representation were not limited to them.

Putting the panel paintings in this wider context of religious images is essential. It also allows a different picture. Religious images went hand in hand with increased attention paid to relics, and with liturgical development, including the crystallization of several Marian feasts, also apparently in the later sixth century.²⁹ The Virgin herself both attracted pictorial representation and benefited from the focus on relics (in her case a contact relic, her robe, or *maphorion*).³⁰ It was also a time when the gaps in doctrine and story were being filled in with apocryphal literature and legend, a fertile period for religious innovation.

We also need to ask what is meant by 'cult'. As I have suggested, if the 'rise of icons' is limited to those known examples of images which are attested as receiving veneration (*proskynesis*), or performing miracles, then the pre-iconoclastic repertoire is small, particularly after allowing for the undoubted effects of later retrojection into the texts; it then indeed becomes more possible to construct a narrative according to which icon veneration came late in comparison with the cult of relics. It is certainly striking that thanks to some excellent work in recent years, we are now able to realize much more fully the extent to which the successful iconophiles constructed a heroic past and an authoritative narrative of icon veneration, and to adopt a more critical approach ourselves in reading the texts. There is no need to repeat here what has been so well covered elsewhere, some of it by Leslie Brubaker herself, but it is indeed worth emphasizing that anyone attempting to write a history of the 'rise' of icons before Iconoclasm runs a serious risk of falling into the trap of being taken in by the later invention of tradition which served the iconophile cause so well after the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy in AD 843.³¹ The narrative that came to prevail, in both texts and images, was one which

28 Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', p. 21.

29 Marian feasts: Brubaker and Cunningham, 'Byzantine veneration of the Theotokos: icons, relics and eighth-century homilies', p. 237.

30 The contact relic of the Virgin's girdle associated with the church of Chalkoprateia in Constantinople is not attested until later: Mango, 'Constantinople as Theotokoupolis', p. 19, again an excellent succinct statement making clear the extent to which later reworkings or fabrications have retrojected later circumstances in relation to icons and relics into earlier texts.

31 Just how much effort was involved in representing the end of Iconoclasm in this way is well brought out by P. Karlin-Hayter, 'Methodios and his synod', in A. Louth and A. Casiday (eds), *Byzantine Orthodoxies* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 55–74.

deliberately obscured the actual complexity of the pre-iconoclastic period – a process which is familiar from modern nationalist historiography, where there are many similarities with the present case.³²

However there is also a danger in carrying the hermeneutics of suspicion too far and in relying too much on a materialist approach. The sixth to eighth centuries not only saw drastic political, military and economic change but also intense religious and doctrinal debate and dispute, as well as the anxiety about the efficacy of relics and saints which John Haldon has described as a 'tense debate about the nature of divine intervention in human affairs and the limits of human free will, and thus about causation'.³³ The context was one in which, one might say, everything was up for grabs in the attempt to evolve an over-riding explanation. While many reasons can be advanced for the urge to iconoclasm, it should not be separated from the highly complex religious turmoil of the preceding period, during which the status of religious images came to offer a new and promising arena for theological argument.³⁴

Religious orthodoxy, which embraced the status of relics, saints and religious images (after all, the ending of Iconoclasm was labeled as a victory for 'orthodoxy'), was regarded by church and state in Byzantium as a marker of identity, but the definition of this 'orthodoxy' was not a given; it was constantly contested and required continual vigilance.³⁵ The rewriting or 'doctoring' of pre-Iconoclastic material by victorious iconophiles to which Leslie Brubaker has drawn our attention was part of that story. But the reasons behind the 'rise' of relic cults, the worship of saints and the veneration of images were, as always, multiple, including for instance the need to furnish new churches, and the social and economic advantages attached to the development of particular shrines. Historians do a service if they can show that the accepted narrative is open to challenge, and Brubaker has helped to show that the Byzantine sources for these deep religious changes cannot always be accepted on their own terms. Finally, to adapt another of her themes, it is not possible to arrive at a replacement narrative unless texts and images are brought together.

32 While in the present case we are not of course dealing with nationalism, we are nevertheless dealing with what became an official narrative of the Byzantine church, and in my view the approach of many of the papers included in K.S. Brown and Y. Hamilakis (eds), *The Usable Past: Greek Metahistories* (Oxford, 2003) can prove extremely illuminating.

33 J. Haldon, "'Tortured by my conscience". The *Laudatio Therapontis*: a neglected source of the later seventh or early eighth centuries', in Amirav and ter Haar Romeny (eds), *From Rome to Constantinople*, pp. 263–78 (at p. 275).

34 See Averil Cameron, 'The language of images: the rise of icons and Christian representation', in D. Wood (ed.), *The Church and the Arts*, Studies in Church History 28 (Oxford, 1992) (repr. in Averil Cameron, *Changing Cultures in Early Byzantium* [Aldershot, 1996], XII).

35 And indeed enforcement: see Averil Cameron, 'Enforcing Orthodoxy in Byzantium', in K. Cooper and J. Gregory (eds), *Discipline and Diversity* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 1–24.

That leaves us with the thorny issue of 'texts and images'. It will be clear that I do not believe they can be so easily separated, or that images in Byzantium are capable of being reduced to the realm of 'material culture'. Texts and images need each other, most particularly in the case of Byzantine religious art, and the historian needs both. Leslie Brubaker has recently written of word and image in Byzantium: 'Words and images communicate differently: words describe, images show. This is likely to be a recurrent theme in future work.'³⁶ 'Ways of seeing', to quote John Berger's memorable title,³⁷ are indeed complex, whether one is an art historian or not. But images in Byzantium cannot stand alone. Perhaps current anthropological theory about the social nexus in which art belongs and the active effects of art and material culture on a society³⁸ may offer a further line of investigation for Byzantinists to follow. The idea that art must have 'meanings' is contentious for any period, and no less for Byzantium. Meanwhile historians of Byzantium have great cause to be grateful for Leslie Brubaker's unfailingly powerful and thought-provoking work.

³⁶ L. Brubaker, 'Critical approaches to art history' in Elizabeth Jeffreys, with J. Haldon and R. Cormack (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, pp. 59–66 (at p. 63).

³⁷ J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London, 1972).

³⁸ See A. Gell, *Art and Agency* (Oxford, 1998).

Messages, Meanings and Metamorphoses: The Icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma¹

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Early in the second half of the ninth century Serapion, a Georgian monk, set out on a journey with a miraculous, life-giving icon. He had been sent by his abbot, Mikel, to found a new monastery. He left the monastery of Parekhta in the province of Tao-Klarjeti (now in north-eastern Turkey), and travelled to the neighbouring province of Samtskhe-Javakheti (now a southern region of the Republic of Georgia), where a series of miraculous events showed him the site for his new foundation: the monastery of Zarzma. The miraculous icon that he travelled with was painted with an image of the Transfiguration of Christ, and it became the central devotional object of the new monastery, which was dedicated to the Feast of the Transfiguration. The veneration of the icon is described in the *Vita* of Serapion Zarzmeli, written by the saint's nephew, Basil Zarzmeli, in the early tenth century.² The ninth-century (or possibly earlier) date for the original icon is secured by an inscription that gives the year 886 that is embossed on the silver-gilt revetment that was commissioned for the icon by a later abbot of the monastery, Payle (Fig. 5.1). This revetment is now displayed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. Located in the first case in the Treasury rooms, the icon and its revetment look forward to the history of metalwork in which the Georgians so excelled, however it also looks back to pre-ninth-century (and in Byzantine terms, pre-Iconoclastic) traditions in iconography and icon veneration. Painted

1 I offer this to Leslie as part of her campaign to work out whether the ninth century was a time to be alive or dead. Thanks to Alisa Oleva, Yuri Piatnitskii, Steve Rapp and Tim Greenwood.

2 Basil of Zarzma, 'Tskhovreba da mokalakobai ghmert natarisa mamisa chuenisa serapionisi [Life and divine works of our blessed father Serapion]', in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Dzveli kartuli agiografiuli lit'erat'uris dzeglebi [Monuments of Ancient Georgian Hagiographical Literature]* (6 vols, Tbilisi, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 319–47; Latin translation: P. Peeters, 'Histoires monastiques géorgiennes', *Analecta Bollandiana* 36 (1917): pp. 168–207.



Fig. 5.1 Icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma, 886 and later additions; present condition (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. © Georgian National Museum).

and adorned at a time of momentous political and theological change in both Byzantium and Georgia, the icon marks a turning point in both Georgian and wider east Christian art.

Although both textual and visual evidence survives about the icon, neither provides direct evidence of the original painted panel that Serapion carried with him; rather our knowledge is presented through a variety of echoes. To study the icon of the Transfiguration is to study an object that has itself undergone a series of metamorphoses. Serapion's original painted icon is lost, only the revetment survives, and this too has been altered over the centuries as new elements were added or repaired so compounding the sense of an object transformed. Serapion's original church, built to house the icon at Zarzma, has similarly been lost, as the monastic church underwent various re-buildings until it reached its present form in the fourteenth century.³ Finally, the nature and form of the veneration originally paid to the icon can only now be reconstructed through the second-hand account of Basil Zarzmeli. These transformations, which describe the icon's change from a vehicle to aid worship and an object of veneration into a more holy relic, are the focus of this paper.

Serapion's Icon

The fate of Serapion's original icon is unknown. The survival of the icon's revetment suggests that the loss of the painted panel was probably due to age and deterioration rather than deliberate attack. However, by the fifteenth or sixteenth century, the region of Samtskhe was subject to frequent Ottoman raids, and all art became vulnerable. It is likely that it was in this period that the original panel had to be replaced by a new, unadorned plane wood panel in order to provide a support for the revetment, which henceforth became the sole visual focus of the icon.⁴ The revetment survived among a number of precious objects which had been removed from their monasteries and taken to more secure sites, particularly the monastery of Shemokmedi which, by the nineteenth century, had built up an impressive collection of objects from other Georgian monasteries.⁵

3 For the history of the monastery: V. Beridze, *Samtskhis khurotmodzghoreba XIII–XVI saukuneebi* [The architecture of Samtskhe XIII–XVI centuries] (Tbilisi, 1955), pp. 91–137.

4 The transfer is discussed in D. Bakradze, *Arkheologicheskoe puteshestvie po Gurii i Adcharie s atlasom* [Archaeological journey to Guria and Ajara with atlas] (St Petersburg, 1878), p. 119. G.N. Chubinashvili, *Georgian Repoussé Work, 8th to 18th Centuries* (Tbilisi, 1957), p. 15, confusingly states that the original panel was replaced in 1023, during the second phase of the revetment; however, this must have been conjecture on his part, as no evidence can be found to support it.

5 An important list of objects preserved there was compiled by N.P. Kondakov and D. Bakradze, *Opis' pamiatnikov drevnosti v nekotorykh khramakh i monastiriakh Gruzii* [A

The original form of the icon can be most accurately gauged from the current display of the surviving revetment in the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi (Fig. 5.1). This measures 131 x 74 cm, from which it is possible to estimate that the original stood approximately 100 x 100 cm. The differences in height and width can be attributed to some of the later changes made to the icon: the addition of the two inscriptions on a plaque below the figures of the three apostles, which increased the icon's height; and the loss of the figure of the prophet Moses, to the right of Christ, which has reduced its width (more of Moses is visible in a nineteenth-century photograph, which also includes the later, probably twelfth-century, frame [Fig. 5.2]). The empty voids in the revetment which allowed the original faces to show through prove that it must first have been a painted panel.⁶ These spaces also allow us to reconstruct the approximate layout of the icon: the three figures of Christ and the prophets were laid out at the same height across the top of the icon and took up approximately two-thirds of the panel. The two apostles, James and John, were depicted crouching in a distinct second register below, and Saint Peter, standing on the left, provided a visual bridge between the two groups. This arrangement of figures is similar to the contemporaneous image in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos, made for Basil I (867–86) in 879–83 (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Grec. 510, fol. 75r).⁷ Beyond this, however, it is impossible to reconstruct Serapion's icon with any greater accuracy, whether iconographic or stylistic. For example, we cannot know whether the painted icon placed the mandorla only around the figure of Christ, as the revetment does, or whether it encompassed Christ and the prophets, as the two surviving ninth-century Byzantine miniatures do. Moreover, the austere, linear depiction of the figures on the revetment need not bear any relationship to the style of the paintings that they covered. A variety of styles exist in the few surviving paintings of this period in Georgia. The only surviving painted icon, the encaustic Hodegetria and angels from Tsilkani,⁸ differs greatly both from manuscripts, such as the classicizing figures of apostles in the Adishi gospels written at Shatberdi monastery in Tao-Klarjeti in 897 (now in the Museum of

description of the monuments of antiquity in some churches and monasteries of Georgia] (St Petersburg, 1890).

6 G.N. Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo* [Georgian repoussé art] (Tbilisi, 1959), p. 31.

7 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), fig. 14; the other ninth-century example, which is broadly similar, is in the Khludov Psalter: M.V. Shchepkina, *Miniatiury khludovskoi psaltyri* [Miniatures of the Khludov Psalter] (Moscow, 1977), fol. 88v.

8 I. Bentchev, 'Zu den georgischen Gottesmutterikonen von Chachuli, Zarzma und Cilkani', in B. Borkopp, B. Schellewald, and L. Theis (eds), *Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte. Festschrift für Horst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 237–48 (esp. pp. 244–7), is very sceptical of this early date, and argues that the 'encaustic' elements are later than the background.



Fig. 5.2 Icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma, 886 and later additions; condition in nineteenth century (probably 1860s), as recorded by Aleksandre Roinashvili (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. © Georgian National Museum).

History and Ethnology, Mestia),⁹ and from wall paintings, whether the thickly outlined figures in the Jvarpatiosani church at Telovani or the more abstracted figures in chapel 5 in the desert monastery of Sabereebi.¹⁰ Equally, the donor relief of Ashot Kuropalates and his brother David from the monastery of Opiza, made in c.826 is drawn from yet another visual tradition.¹¹

The *Life* of Saint Serapion provides a *terminus ante quem* for the icon, but it is not a very precise one. Most scholars now agree that the *Life* was composed by Serapion's pupil and nephew Basil Zarzmeli in the early tenth century, and that it refers back, at the earliest, to the start of the ninth century. Scholars have estimated that Serapion founded Zarzma in c.865 and died in c.900.¹² It is less easy to reconcile this with the evidence of the icon, the earliest inscription of which names Pavle as abbot in 886; however the absence of any mention of Serapion suggests that he was already dead when the revetment was commissioned.

Although the date and appearance of the icon are unclear, its status is absolute. The *Life* makes frequent reference to it as miraculous and life-giving [ცხოველმყოფელი and გამაცხოველებელი ხატი კაცებისა].¹³ It uses these terms from the outset, suggesting that the icon had an established reputation already, and so must have been in existence for some time before Serapion took it. The high regard with which it is treated by all who view it in the *Life* further indicates that this reputation was already well disseminated among the Georgians of the region. The size of the icon can also be counted as evidence for its reputation: it can have been no easy task for Serapion to carry this bulky object through the rough lands and through the wild

9 E. Taqaishvili, 'Adishskoe evangelie' [The Adishi Gospels], *Materialy po arkheologii kavkaza* [Materials for the archaeology of the Caucasus] 14 (1916); R.O. Shmerling, *Khudozhestvennoe oformlenie gruzinskoi rukopisnoi knigi IX–XI stoletii* [The artistic design of Georgian manuscript books of the 9th to 11th centuries] (Tbilisi, 1979), pp. 16–32.

10 For good colour images of Sabereebi, the Adishi gospels and the Tsilkani icon: D. Tumanishvili, K. Mikeladze, and M. Didebulidze (eds), *Georgian Christian Art* (Tbilisi, 2008) pp. 94, 96, 100; for Telovani: Z. Skhirtladze, *Adreuli shua saukuneebis kartuli kedlis mkhatoroba: telovani jvarpatiosani* [Early medieval Georgian monumental painting: Telovani church of the Holy Cross] (Tbilisi, 2008), pls VI–IX.

11 In A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1998), pp. 222–4, I dated this relief to the tenth century following N. Shoshiashvili, *Aghmosavlet da samkhret sakartvelo V–X ss. Kartuli tsartserebis korpusi: Lapidaruli tsartserebi* [A Corpus of Georgian Inscriptions in East and South Georgia, V–X centuries] (Tbilisi, 1980), vol. 1, p. 286. However, this date no longer seems tenable and has no support from other scholars, and so I revert here to the traditional ninth-century date.

12 M. Tarnishvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* (Vatican, 1955), pp. 103–4, estimates dates as follows: Serapion starts as a monk c.850, builds Zarzma 861–68; dies after 900; Basil writes the *Life* c.920. These dates have been argued through more thoroughly in N.Z. Vachnadze, *Serapion zarzmelis tskhovreba rogoris saistorio tsqaro* [The Life of Serapion Zarzmeli as an historical source] (Tbilisi, 1975); see also D. Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia. A History* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 43–4.

13 Basil of Zarzma, 'Life of Serapion', chs 10, 16, on pp. 335, 342.

woods that the *Life* describes.¹⁴ It is no mere portable icon, but rather a monumental work that would truly have commanded respect from those that encountered it.

From its first appearance, the icon – the ‘help and hope of all Christians’ – is always the centre of attention.¹⁵ When the local ruler of Samtskhe, Giorgi Chorchaneli, first meets Serapion, his immediate act is to bow down before the icon.¹⁶ This establishes a pattern for the icon, which is venerated and kissed by those that encounter it. It is also the first to be housed at the monastery: the monks place it in the church they have built before they start to erect their own cells.¹⁷

The reputation of the icon suggests that we should place its origins back into the eighth century at the very latest. There is certainly evidence for the veneration of miraculous icons in Georgia over these centuries: legends place both the Mandylyon and the Keramion in Georgia by the sixth century; although neither legend is recorded before the tenth century.¹⁸ Some corroboration, however, comes from the wall paintings in the Jvarpatiosani church at Telovani in central Georgia, dated to the eighth or ninth century, which includes an image of the Mandylyon, labelled ‘the Holy Face of God’, in the centre of the apse,¹⁹ and from the miraculous image of the Mandylyon from Anchi (known as the Anchiskhati), whose central painted image has been dated to the sixth or seventh century.²⁰

The icon also demonstrates the importance of images in Georgia at a crucial moment in the revival of the country in the ninth century after the devastation of the Arab raids of the seventh century.²¹ From the early ninth century, the Iberian branch of the Bagrationi family which had moved away from the eastern province of Kartli, established itself in Tao-Klarjeti and began the process of rebuilding an independent state. This culminated in the recognition of Adarnase II as Kuropalates of Tao-Klarjeti and king of Kartli by the Caliphate and the Byzantine Empire in 888. Much of the work was

14 As for example in ch. 8: *Ibid.*, p. 329.

15 *Ibid.*, ch. 5, on p. 323.

16 *Ibid.*, ch. 6, on pp. 324–6.

17 *Ibid.*, ch. 13, on pp. 328–9.

18 For full details on these: Z. Skhirtladze, ‘Canonizing the Apocrypha: the Abgar Cycle in the Alaverdi and Gelati Gospels’, in H.L. Kessler and G. Wolf (eds), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (Bologna, 1998), pp. 69–94 (esp. pp. 70–72).

19 Z. Skhirtladze, ‘Under the sign of the Triumph of Holy Cross: Telovani Church Original Decoration and its Iconographic Programme’, *Cah Arch* 47 (1999): pp. 101–18 (at 103).

20 S. Amiranashvili, *Beka Opizari* [Beka of Opiza] (Tbilisi, 1964), pp. 20–21, noting heavy restoration in the seventeenth and eighteenth century; V. Putsko, ‘Les images clipeatae chrétiennes primitives et l’icone du Sauveur d’Anci’, *Revue des études géorgiennes et caucasiennes* 2 (1986): pp. 202–3.

21 B. Martin-Hisard, ‘Moines et monastères Géorgiens du 9e siècle: La Vie de Saint Grigol de Xancta. Deuxième partie: Une mise en perspective historique’, *REB* 60 (2002): pp. 8–33; W.E.D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), pp. 79–82.

led by monks founding and re-establishing monasteries across the region, and so settling populations and re-opening land for agriculture. The most important of these monks was Grigol Khandzteli, the teacher of Mikel Parekhteli, Serapion's abbot.²² The icon, then, provides important evidence for the continuation of image making and image veneration in Georgia, at a time coinciding with the end of Byzantine Iconoclasm.

Whilst this contextualizes the icon, it fails to explain one important aspect of the image that has received little attention: its iconography. This does not fit the usual pattern for miraculous icons in the early middle ages, all of which are in the form of 'portraits', either of Christ or of his mother.²³ Normally we would expect a narrative icon to be more limited in meaning. The Council of 787, for example, promoted such images in a more defensive way, commending images that 'bring to our mind the gospel narrative, for the purpose – as we have said many times – of reminding us of the gospel and explaining its story'.²⁴ However, the veneration afforded to the Zarzma icon and its miraculous reputation indicate that it was treated very differently from most narrative images. Given that icons were believed to be efficacious because they shared in the essence of their prototypes, we should try to view this narrative icon within a similar framework. This requires that we look at it as a portrayal of a likeness, rather than of an event. Viewing the icon in this way is supported by its visual structure, which focuses all attention on the dominant, central figure of Christ, with the prophets and apostles essentially acting as supporting attributes. It is also supported by the nature of the Transfiguration: unlike most other events in the gospels, its narrative is explicitly about likeness. The story is entirely concerned with the true appearance of Christ as both human and divine.²⁵ In many ways, the Transfiguration provides the truest likeness of Christ in the gospels, as it is the one moment at which his two natures were simultaneously manifested. It therefore seems likely that the

22 Giorgi Merchule, 'Life of Grigol Khandzteli', in I. Abuladze (ed.), *Dzveli kartuli agiografiuli lit'erat'uris dzegebi* [Monuments of Ancient Georgian Hagiographical Literature], vol. 1, pp. 248–319 (at 281); trans. B. Martin-Hisard, 'Moines et monastères Géorgiens du 9e siècle: La Vie de Saint Grigol de Xancta', *REB* 59 (2001): p. 55; Basil of Zarzma, 'Life of Serapion', ch. 3 on p. 322.

23 The greatest surviving collection is that in Rome: P. Amato, *De Vera Effigie Mariae. Antiche Icone Romane* (Rome, 1988). On the Mandyliion: H.L. Kessler and G. Wolf (eds), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*. Moses Khorenatsi records a miraculous relief of the Descent from the Cross in Armenia, but the healing powers of this object lay in the fact that it was carved from a piece of wood left from the making of the cross: S. Der Nersessian, 'Image worship in Armenia and its opponents', in *Études Byzantines et Arméniennes* (2 vols, Louvain, 1973), vol. 1, pp. 405–15 reprinted from *Armenian Quarterly* 1 (1946): pp. 67–81 (at 410).

24 J.D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Graz, 1960), XIII, p. 288c; trans. D.J. Sahas, *Icon and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto, 1986), p. 113.

25 For a general overview: J.A. McGuckin, 'The patristic exegesis on the Transfiguration', *Studia Patristica* 18 (1985): pp. 335–41.

miraculous nature of the icon and its extraordinary reputation in the ninth century came from an understanding of the image as providing an authentic likeness of Christ. This linked the icon directly to Christ, and so allowed him to act through the image. The frustrating absence of any details about the miracles which the icon performed means that it is not possible to pursue this any further; only to note the unique combination of narrative and likeness that this icon provided.

This dogmatic element to the image may also partly explain why this icon was so highly revered in the ninth century. One of the attractions of the image may well have been its role in justifying the legitimacy of Christian images and so arguing the iconophile cause. As Theodore of Stoudios (759–826) had recently written in his *Third refutation against the iconoclasts*, the Transfiguration proved that ‘the invisible one had an appearance of likeness, the formless one had a form, and the measureless one came encompassed within a measure’.²⁶ The revival of image making in Byzantium in the second half of the ninth century placed great stress on this and other theophanies.²⁷ It is possible that Iconoclasm may have had a more immediate impact on the veneration of icons in Georgia than is normally thought. Georgian scholars have argued that Iconoclasm bypassed Georgia, and there is certainly a continuing tradition of image making through the eighth and ninth centuries, although much of the visual evidence is now very fragmentary.²⁸ The stress laid on the Transfiguration by iconophiles in the eighth and ninth centuries suggests that the Georgians’ interest in this icon may have been informed, in part at least, by the growing importance of this iconography in Byzantium. Knowledge of Iconoclasm is alluded to on the Mandylion from Anchi (the Anchiskhati): one of the inscriptions (admittedly added in the eighteenth century) claims that the miraculous icon was brought to Georgia from Constantinople to escape destruction at the court of Leo III (717–41).²⁹

The dogmatic content of the Transfiguration also provides a second possible, and more localized, explanation for the importance of the icon. As well as demonstrating the veracity of images, the Transfiguration also served to promote the Chalcedonian theology of the dual nature of Christ. John of Damascus’ (c.675–749) *Homily on the Transfiguration of the Lord* interprets the theophany in clearly Chalcedonian terms: ‘What was human became divine,

26 Theodore of Stoudios, *Antirhetici adversus iconomachos*, III, i.53, PG 99:413; trans. C.P. Roth, *Theodore of Stoudios: On the holy icons* (Crestwood, New York, 1981), p. 97.

27 L. Brubaker, ‘Byzantine Art in the ninth century: Theory, Practice, and Culture’, *BMGS* 13 (1989): pp. 23–93 (esp. pp. 40–42).

28 This tends to be argued more through omission – see for example the absence of any mention of Iconoclasm in S. Amiranashvili, *Istoriia gruzinskogo iskusstva* [The History of Georgian Art] (Moscow, 1963); for a brief, outline setting out the evidence: Z. Skhirtladze, ‘The Iconoclastic Controversy and Georgian Art during the 8th–9th cc.’, *Byzantine Studies Conference. Abstracts* 18 (1992), pp. 6–7.

29 Amiranashvili, *Beka Opizari*, pp. 12–13.

and what was divine human by the mode of exchange and unconfused mutual coinherence and the strictest hypostatic union. For that which was eternally and this which became later were one.³⁰ This interpretation would have been particularly important in the theological disagreements between the Chalcedonian Georgian Church and the non-Chalcedonian Armenian Church. Whilst Samtskhe was a clearly Georgian province, the region of Tao to the south had a more mixed population, with Armenian communities among the Georgians.³¹ There is evidence of interchange across the Georgian and Armenian marchlands: in the 770s Artawazd Mamikonian launched a rebellion against the Muslim rulers in Dvin and, after killing tax collectors in the district of Shirak, he had to flee to Samtskhe.³² According to Lewond he then went on to rule part of western Georgia, before later appearing as a general in the army of Leo IV (775–80) in Byzantium.³³ There is therefore every reason to suppose that the icon may have been visualized as a bastion of Orthodox belief, in which the dogma was underwritten by the miraculous nature of the image. There are certainly analogies for such a use of the Transfiguration. In the sixth century the Transfiguration was given great prominence in the apses of San Apollinare in Classe and Saint Catherine's on Mount Sinai, and the details of the iconography of each have been linked respectively to the defence of Orthodoxy against Arianism in Italy and against Monophysitism in Egypt.³⁴ Whilst both these theological arguments must remain speculative (and neither is alluded to in Basil Zarzmelis's *Life*), they fit the regional and political context for the ninth century.

The icon of the Transfiguration, then, can in many ways be seen as the end of an old tradition: a polemical image that sought to visualize arguments about the visibility and nature of God, the first as a response to Iconoclasm, the second as a counter to Monophysitism. At the same time, the icon provides evidence that it stands at the start of a new tradition that would come to dominate Georgian icon production over the coming centuries: metal revetments.

30 *Sermo in transfigurationem domini* 2.47–50 in B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1969–88), vol. 5: p. 438, trans. J.A. McGuckin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition* (Lewiston, New York and Queenston, Ontario, 1986), pp. 202–25; the Chalcedonian interpretation is discussed in A. Louth, *St. John Damascene: tradition and originality in Byzantine theology* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 234–43.

31 R.H. Hewsen, *Armenia: a historical atlas* (Chicago, 2001), maps 74, 75, 83.

32 Z. Arzoumanian (trans. and ed.), *History of Lewond, the eminent vardapet of the Armenians* (Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, 1982), ch. 34 on pp. 129–30.

33 P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963), p. 22.

34 For Ravenna: O. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress. Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Princeton, 1948), pp. 40–62; for Sinai: K. Weitzmann, 'The Mosaic in St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110/6 (1966): pp. 392–405.

The First Transformation

The first transformation of the icon of the Transfiguration took place in 886, when it was adorned with a silver gilt revetment (Fig. 5.1). This work is of enormous importance in the history of Georgian art, as it is the earliest surviving large-scale piece of *repoussé* metalwork.³⁵ The creation of the revetment is recorded in an inscription, written in *asomtavruli* the Georgian majuscule alphabet, at the bottom of the panel: 'In the name of God, the adornment of this icon [was made] for the salvation of Father Giorgi, and the lords: Parsman *eristavi*, Ivane, Tki..., Miriani, Perisi, Sula and their people. By Pavle, *mamasakhlisi* of Christ. *Koronikon* was *rk* [ჟ჏ = 106 + 780 = 886].'³⁶ The inscription is not original: it is a copy made in the eleventh century when it was added as the prescript to a new inscription recording a later addition to the icon (discussed below). However, there is no evidence to think that the 886 text was altered when it was remade (it does not, for example, imply any kinship between the ninth- and eleventh-century donors; nor would there be any reason for the date to have been doctored). We now turn from textual to visual evidence.

Christ stands on a footstool in the centre of the icon. He is surrounded by a mandorla formed of four concentric bands, his right hand raised in blessing, his left holding a scroll against his chest. He is named in the abbreviated inscription, also in *asomtavruli*. This was embossed into the background to either side of his head, but only the second half now survives: [ჟ჏] ჟ჏ [იესუ] ქ[რისტე] – Jesus Christ. However, the sheet that the letters stand on forms part of the halo, which, as will be shown below, belongs to a later, eleventh-century phase.

The two prophets flank Christ: on the left Elijah is named in a small incised inscription (ჰა Ἰλῆτ [ჰინდა]დ იგლია, Saint Elijah), and Moses is similarly inscribed on the right (ჰა მოსე [ჰინდა]დ მოსე, Saint Moses).³⁷ Although little can now be seen of either prophet, more was visible when Aleksandre Roinashvili first photographed the icon in the nineteenth century (Fig. 5.2). This allows us to judge at least the schematic drapery and position of the outstretched

35 The principal publication of the icon remains Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, pp. 27–42; supplementing Chubinashvili, *Georgian Repoussé Work, 8th to 18th Centuries*, p. 15, pls 1–2.

36 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 28. For the validity of the *koronikon* reading: E. Taq'aishvili, 'Zarzmskii monastir', ego restavratsiia i freski' [Zarzma monastery, its restoration and frescoes], *Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnostei i plemen Kavkaza* 35 (1905): pp. 1–112 (at 67–8), who notes that the two letters giving the *koronikon* were already detached from the icon, and so it is conceivable that they may have been associated with a different part of the inscription. However, he and all later scholars have accepted that it does refer to the date. The *koronikon* dating system is explained in V. Grumel, *Traité d'études byzantines: La Chronologie* (Paris, 1958), pp. 146–53. Georgian titles (such as *eristavi*) are described in Allen, *A History of the Georgian People*, pp. 237–49.

37 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 33: The inscription for Moses is mistakenly transcribed ჟ჏ [sic] მოსე.

hands. Below Christ are fragments of the three apostles. That to the right is named as John (წაღებულ წმინდას ოკანე), just below his outstretched right hand; although the silhouette of his head is formed by a much later insertion adorned with striped decoration that also defines the head of Saint James to the left. James is also identified in an embossed inscription (წმინდას ოკანე) that contrasts markedly with the small incised inscriptions of Moses and Elijah, suggesting that the prophets' identifications may be later additions. The position of Saint Peter, overlapping the lower part of Elijah, can now only be made out from Roinashvili's photograph.

The figures are characterized by simple, flowing lines that delineate drapery. For the figure of Christ these can be divided between the double lines of his himation that sweep diagonally down from his left shoulder, and the contrasting narrower vertical lines that form his chiton. Between these the surface of the metal is left flat and smooth, apart from a subtle use of punching: single punched dots form lines alongside the main folds, and small rosettes made with either five, seven or nine dots are used more sparingly to suggest a woven pattern on his robes. Stippling appears on the border of Christ's robe hanging down from his left hand. For the figure of Saint John, the drapery lines are simpler still, six parallel horizontal lines form his prostrate back, and two groups of semi-circular lines form his bended legs. The revetment contains an implicit hierarchy of importance through the depth of relief, with Christ the most prominent, followed by the prophets. The apostles are in the lowest relief. The effects of this restrained and simple use of *repoussé* are striking. The icon has a clarity and legibility that conveys its narrative and essential theological point very effectively. As has long been recognized, this early revetment does not seek to exploit the potential of embossing, and makes little attempt to produce a high level of relief or rounded figures. Giorgi Chubinashvili has suggested that this may have been in order for the revetment to reflect the painted original that it covered rather than to provide a new image.³⁸ However, as noted above, any attempt to reconstruct the original icon from its cover must remain speculative and conjectural.

Unlike many later revetments that leave both faces and hands on view, so emphasizing the sanctity and efficacy of the parts of the body that communicate and act, the Zarzma icon chose from the outset to leave only faces visible. Hands are covered.³⁹ They are, however, accentuated on the revetment by being both enlarged and embossed in higher relief. This is most visible in Christ's hands: his right hand raised in blessing has long delicate fingers that are particularly accentuated by the deep shadows around them. Equally, the surviving hand of Elijah to the left is positioned so as to draw attention to Christ's.

38 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 36.

39 For issues on veiled/unveiled hands see Liz James in this volume.

The addition of a revetment to the icon of the Transfiguration by Giorgi, Pavle, Parsman and their colleagues must be seen primarily as an act of supreme and lavish piety.⁴⁰ The extent and expense of the metal required must have been a considerable drain on all their resources. It is the most eloquent proof of the high esteem in which the icon was held: a materialization of its spiritual value. Jannic Durand has suggested that one of the reasons for the emergence of metalwork revetments in Byzantium during the ninth century was as part of an attempt to maintain 'aesthetic unity' inside churches.⁴¹ He sees the growing use of precious metals in the decoration of the templon screen as a spur to add similar adornment to icons as well. The revetment added to the Zarzma icon is unlikely to have been part of such a campaign, as the *Life of Serapion* makes no reference to the original church at the monastery having any sumptuous decoration. Instead, we should see the Zarzma revetment as a specific response to the icon's spiritual power, and the donors' desire to both adorn and protect it.

The decision to place a revetment over the icon must have changed the way in which worshippers could interact with it. The revetment hid most of the wonder-working panel, and gave immediate access only to the faces of the participants in the event depicted.⁴² At a purely visual level, it transformed the icon. The Georgian word for 'transfiguration' [ფერისცვლება] translates as 'changing colour', and the gilded surface of the new icon literally matched this, as the surface became burnished gold and silver.⁴³ The light that would have reflected back off its surface, and the contrast this would have produced with the coloured faces that still showed through would have brought the words of the Gospels to life: 'And he was transfigured before them: and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light' (Matthew 17:2). The quality of light that surrounded and emerged from this large icon would have given it real power and presence in the church.⁴⁴

Whilst the purpose of the revetment was clearly to adorn the original icon, it also served partially to 'privatize' it. Viewers seeking to venerate the icon could now only do so through the intermediary of the revetment, and this explicitly sought salvation for the particular members of the ecclesiastical and

40 A. Grabar, *Les Revêtements en or et en argent des icônes byzantines du moyen âge* (Venice, 1975), pp. 4–6.

41 J. Durand, 'Precious-Metal Icon Revetments', in H.C. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York, 2004), pp. 243–51.

42 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 32.

43 Beyond this simple meaning, the word has many further connotations linked to the transformation of mood, character and nature, all of which add further resonance to the Transfiguration of Christ. I am grateful to Zaza Skhirtladze for bringing these complexities to my attention.

44 Compare G. Peers, *Sacred Shock: Framing visual experience in Byzantium* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2004), pp. 126–8, on light in the Genoa Mandyliion once it was surrounded by a revetment.

secular hierarchies in Samtskhe mentioned in the inscription. This is then a particularly early example of a phenomenon that was to become more common in the Byzantine world in later centuries, in which major icons were effectively commandeered by those in authority and presented in a new way so that all veneration aided their salvation as much as that of the viewer. A famous example can be found in the 1152 *typikon* for Isaac Komnenos' Kosmosoteira monastery. In this he writes of the icon of the Mother of God from Rhaidestos, on which he had already fitted a gold and silver revetment, demanding that it be moved and placed for eternity at this tomb.⁴⁵ Those seeking the icon had to come to Isaac's tomb, and then pray through his revetment to reach the icon and then the Virgin within.

The Second Transformation

The icon from Zarzma next seems to have been changed in the eleventh century. The evidence comes from the second two lines in the inscription beneath the panel: 'In the name of God, I, Zviad *eristavi*, son of Raba *eristavi*, blessed of soul, was honoured to adorn this precious icon. O icon of the Transfiguration, protect my body and my soul, and help my soul on the day [of judgement].'⁴⁶

The first point to note is that Zviad saw his contribution as an addition to the icon; in adding his inscription he had the 886 inscription re-inscribed to act as the first half of his own text. Viewers of the icon were now faced with an object of cumulative veneration: to pray to Serapion's icon now meant to pray also for the salvation of its ninth- and eleventh-century improvers.

It is less clear what was altered at this stage in the icon's history. The most visible alteration was the addition of a new surround to Christ's halo (which also involved remaking Christ's inscription). The border of the halo includes a very distinct pattern that became very prominent in this period. It is a stylized palmette that resolves into geometric elements: a zig-zag motif that cuts into a series of adjoining concentric circles (sometimes called palmettes with concentric ribs). The pattern appears most clearly on the fragment of the halo that is now in the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg (Fig. 5.3).⁴⁷ The

45 N.P. Ševčenko (trans.), *Typikon of the Sebastokrator Isaac Komnenos for the Monastery of the Mother of God Kosmoteira near Bera*, in J. Thomas and A.C. Hero (eds), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: a comparative translation of the surviving founders' typika and testaments* (5 vols, Washington, DC, 2000) vol. 2, p. 839 (ch. 90).

46 I take my reading of the inscription from Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 32.

47 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 33; K.A. Rakitina, 'Pamiatniki gruzinskogo chekana po serebru' [Works of Georgian metalwork in silver], *Trudi Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* 5 (1961): pp. 64–75 (at pp. 64–5); Y. Piatnitsky, O. Baddeley, E. Brunner, and M.M. Mango (eds), *Sinai Byzantium Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (London, 2000), p. 120 (cat. B.97g),

design is seen frequently in architectural decoration, as around the inscription of Giorgi I (1014–27) set above the west door to the cathedral of Ishkhani.⁴⁸ In 1957, Giorgi Chubinashvili wrote that the painted panel was removed during this restoration, and the revetment was fixed to a new panel, on which only the faces were painted.⁴⁹ However, there is no evidence to support this assertion (it is certainly not alluded to in the inscription), so this idea cannot be supported.

It is generally accepted that the Zviad referred to in the inscription was commander of the army of Giorgi I, king of Georgia against the emperor Basil II (976–1025), who invaded Georgia in 1023.⁵⁰ If this is the case, then the war between Georgia and Byzantium could perhaps be implicitly characterized as one of the efficacy of miraculous icons: on the one hand, Zviad with his faith in the Zarzma icon, and

on the other Basil II who led his army against Georgia with the Mandylion and the True Cross. *Matiane Kartlisai*, one of the constituent chronicles of *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (literally the *Life of Georgia*, effectively the Georgian royal chronicles) records that Basil's veneration of the Mandylion was a combative one: before the decisive battle, Basil threw the Mandylion to the ground saying 'if you give me into the hands of my enemies, I shall not worship you



Fig. 5.3 Fragment of the halo of Christ from the Icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma, eleventh century (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).

48 W. Djabadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjet'i and Šavšet'i* (Stuttgart, 1992), pp. 211–13, fig. 293; a similar design also appears on the base of the southeast pier beneath the dome: *ibid.*, fig. 285.

49 Chubinashvili, *Georgian Repoussé Work, 8th to 18th Centuries*, p. 15.

50 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, p. 32, following I. Javakhishvili, *Kartuli paleografia* [Georgian palaeography] (Tbilisi, 1926), pp. 166–7, which was unavailable to me. Although the evidence linking the Zviad of the inscription to the commander of Giorgi I's army is circumstantial, it should be noted that no other *eristav* named Zviad appears in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (the collective name for the Georgian medieval chronicles) from this period or region.

ever again'.⁵¹ In the subsequent encounter Basil routed the Georgian troops, allowing him to take control of the regions of Tao, Basean, Kola-Artaani and Javakheti, which, we are told, he devastated twice within a year.⁵² He also took Giorgi's son, Bagrat, as a hostage to Constantinople for three years. It is perhaps ironic that Zarzma, the major monastery in Samtskhe in this period, is most famous among Byzantinists because it retains an extensive inscription recording the great cooperation between Georgia and Byzantium earlier in Basil II's reign, when Davit Kuropalates sent aid to the emperor to help defeat the revolt of Bardas Skleros (976–79).⁵³ The battle of 1023 is evidence of how fast the alliances of the region could shift. If *Matiane Kartlisai* sees the victory as one of the triumph of the Mandylion (it makes no mention of the Zarzma icon), Zviad and Giorgi's defeat does not seem to have had any impact on the veneration of the icon.

Another object made at about the same time as Zviad's restoration indicates that the icon continued to be venerated; indeed that the nature of the veneration became more elaborate. The object is a silver rhipidion, which proclaims itself to have been made especially to protect the image (Fig. 5.4a and b). It is quatrefoil in shape, and each lobe along with the central panel is decorated with images of angels. The reverse has a tetramorph in the centre and the four radiating discs that make up the cross shape have adoring pairs of angels in them; the only difference between them being that the pair above the tetramorph adore a tall cross that they hold between them. The obverse is more narrative in appearance: in the centre two angels hold up a disc with a cross in it; to left and right angels approach bearing the paten and chalice, with further angels holding rhipidia behind them. Above and below pairs of angels lower their heads in veneration of the cross. This general decorative scheme appears on many other early Georgian rhipidia.⁵⁴ The frame around each pair of angels has the same strip of palmettes with concentric ribs that appears around Christ's halo on the Transfiguration icon. However, this is the only point of comparison between the two objects (and by no means unique to these two); the rhipidion makes no reference to the icon that it was designed

51 The battle is recorded in *Matiane Kartlisai*, in S. Qaukhchishvili (ed.), *Kartlis tskhovreba* [The Life of Kartli] (Tbilisi, 1955), pp. 287–9; trans. R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 283–4. The battle is also recounted in the chronicle of Sumbat Davitisdze, but he only refers to the relic of the True Cross and not the Mandylion: Qaukhchishvili, *Kartlis tskhovreba*, pp. 383–5; trans. S.H. Rapp, *Studies in medieval Georgian historiography: Early texts and Eurasian contexts* (Louvain, 2003), pp. 363–5.

52 Qaukhchishvili, *Kartlis tskhovreba*, 383; trans. Rapp, *Studies in medieval Georgian historiography*, 364.

53 Taq'aishvili, 'Zarzmskii monastir', pp. 18–20; the inscription and related events are discussed in N. Adontz, 'Tornik le Moine', *Byzantion* 13 (1938): pp. 143–64; C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 242–3.

54 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, figs 22–3 (Obuji), 26–7 (Kutaisi), 116–18 (Kopadze rhipidion in Mestia), 119–24 (3 examples from Shemokmedi).

to protect. Its function is explained by the inscription that adorns its outer rim: 'In the name of God, I, Parsman *eristavi*, son of the blessed sinner Ivane Laklaki, made this rhipidion in prayer for myself, my children and all the members of our family and in commemoration of my blessed parents and brothers as well as all dead members of our family, and I put it in the church of Zarzma, my patrimony, before the icon of the Transfiguration. Now, saintly priests and deacons, who will bring the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, mention us in your saintly prayers.'⁵⁵

The imagery and references in the inscription emphasize the Eucharist: the priests are exhorted to remember the Laklakisdze family as they partake in the liturgy, and angels are shown enacting it. Yet at the same time the object claims to have been commissioned to stand before the icon. Functionally, it seems to blur the distinction between the Transfiguration of Christ and the transubstantiation of the bread and wine in the Eucharist. The icon seems ever closer to literally embodying the body of Christ. It must therefore have been seen as an evocation of the divine and comparable to the divine presence in the host. It seems to imply that the icon and the Eucharist were being elided.

The Third Transformation

The last major transformation of the icon involved the addition of a frame around the icon.⁵⁶ It is visible in Roinashvili's photograph (Fig. 5.2), but has since been removed. The upper border contained a Deesis at the centre (now preserved separately in the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi [Fig. 5.5a]), with a frontal archangel in the left corner (presumably matched by one in the right corner).⁵⁷ Between them was a long strip of foliate scroll work, with two parallel rows of swirls, each with an acanthus leaf in the centre (Fig. 5.5g). In the lower part of the left side of the frame were the Anastasis and a fragment of the Entry into Jerusalem. To this core of scenes scholars have gradually added other surviving plaques, now all in the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg: the Raising of Lazarus, the Crucifixion, and the Ascension

55 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, pp. 127–33, figs 114, 115; inscription on p. 128.

56 The icon has undoubtedly undergone subsequent alterations to its fabric, as many parts of the revetment have been replaced in more recent centuries. This is most evident in the sheet of metal below the feet of Christ that has been crudely shaped to outline the heads of Saints John and James. This is adorned with diagonal strips each decorated with a slightly different foliate scroll, and probably dates to the sixteenth century or later. Such elements can be regarded as 'repairs' to the icon rather than major additions.

57 Chubinashvili, *Georgian Repoussé Work, 8th to 18th Centuries*, fig. 144a.



Fig 5.4a Rhipidion of Parsman Laklakisdze from Zarzma (front), eleventh century, (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. © Georgian National Museum).

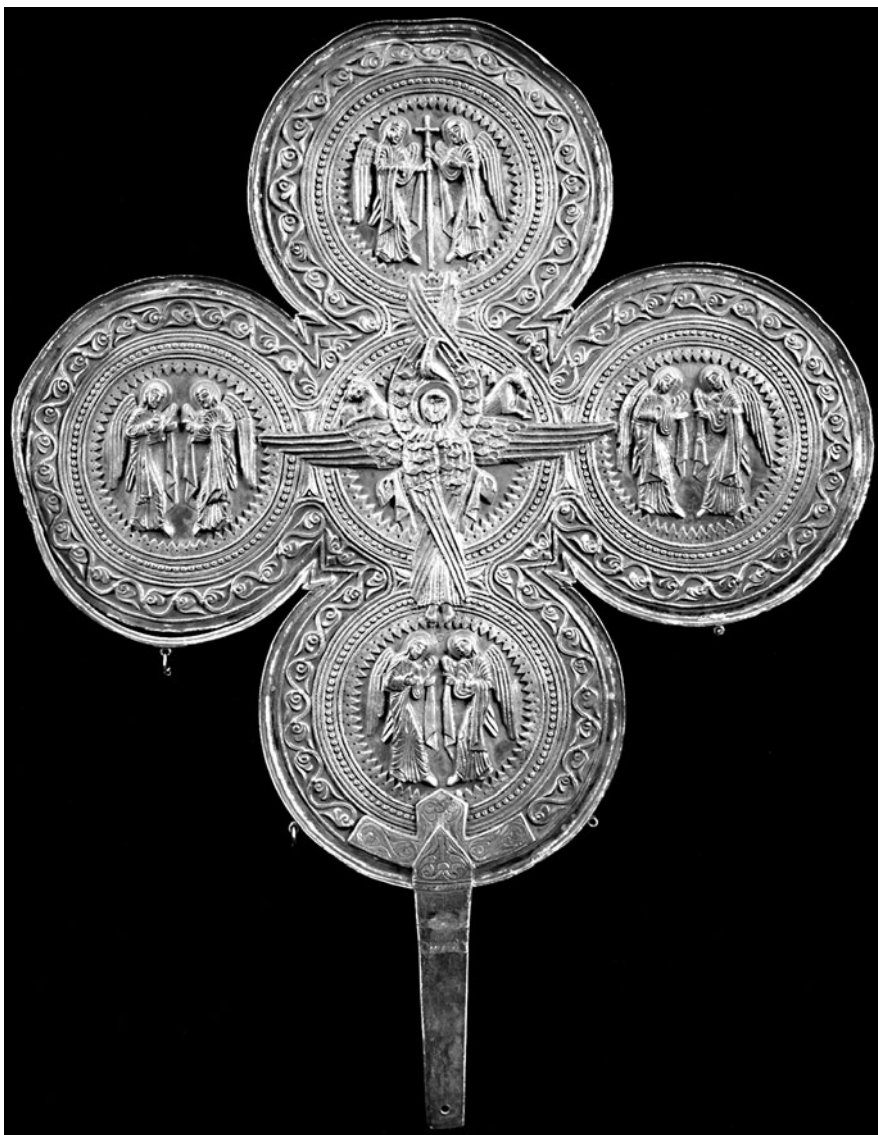


Fig 5.4b Rhipidion of Parsman Laklakisdze from Zarzma (back), eleventh century, (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. © Georgian National Museum).

Fig. 5.5 Panels from the frame of the icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma, twelfth century.



Fig. 5.5a Deesis (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. © Georgian National Museum).



Fig. 5.5b Raising of Lazarus (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).



Fig. 5.5c Crucifixion (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).



Fig. 5.5d Ascension (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).



Fig. 5.5e Pentecost (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).



Fig. 5.5f Koimesis (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).



Fig. 5.5g Detail of ornament (© State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).

(Figs 5.5b-d),⁵⁸ and most recently the Pentecost and the Koimesis (Figs 5.5e-f).⁵⁹ On the grounds of their stylistic and iconographic details, they have been dated to the twelfth century.

The size and spacing of the plaques and the square foliate panels that separate them indicates that there was room for six panels on each side, and judging by the surviving panels these would most likely have comprised the standard dodekaorton. Intriguingly, we cannot know whether the Transfiguration was included in the small narrative panels or whether the large central image was meant to fit in to this broader narrative. The addition of a frame accentuates the narrative aspects of the panel over its iconic aspects, and suggests a change in the way that the image was venerated in the twelfth century.⁶⁰ It fits a larger pattern of change in the presentation of icons at this time. In the 1120s the icon of the Theotokos from Khakhuli was reset in a triptych, which was adorned with a multiplicity of apparently random enamels which re-contextualized the central image.⁶¹ At the end of the century, the miraculous image of Christ from Anchi (the Anchiskhati) was placed in a new frame commissioned by Ioane Rkinaeli, bishop of Anchi, from Beka Opizari, the foremost goldsmith of the period.⁶² The frame that surrounded the face of Christ was decorated with many individual figures of saints and angels. These served both to adorn the image, but also to alter it. The face of Christ was no longer simply an *acheiropoietos* image, it also took on a number of new meanings as it interacted with the figures that now surrounded it. Christ became a participant in the Deesis, joined by his mother and John the Baptist on the frame to either side, suggesting the image was more closely focused on intercession. Equally, the presence of the Hetoimasia in the upper border added an eschatological aspect.

58 These were first linked with the icon by A.I. Kakovkin, 'Vnov' obnaruzhennyye fragmenty chekannoi ikony "Preobrazhenie" iz Zarzmy' [Recently discovered fragments of the *repoussé* icon of the Transfiguration from Zarzma], in *Vostochnoe Sredizemnomor'e i Kavkaz IV–XVI vv.* (Leningrad, 1988), pp. 105–12; Piatnitsky, Baddeley, Brunner, and Mango, *Sinai Byzantium Russia*, p. 119 (cat. B.97a–c).

59 A.S. Mirzoyan, 'Novye fragmenty ikony "Preobrazhenie" iz Zarzmy' [New fragments of the Icon of the Transfiguration from Zarzma], in *Ermitazhnye chteniia pamiati B.B. Piotrovskogo. Tezisi dokladov* (St Petersburg, 1999), pp. 58–9; Piatnitsky, Baddeley, Brunner, and Mango, *Sinai Byzantium Russia*, p. 119 (cat. B.97d–e).

60 For a study in relation to the use of saints to frame images of the Mother of God: B.V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2006), pp. 91–7.

61 On the history of the triptych: S. Amiranashvili, *Khakhulis karedi* [The Khakhuli triptych] (Tbilisi, 1972); R. Qenia, *Khakhulis ghotismshoblis khatis karedis mochediloba* [The chasing of the triptych of the icon of the Mother of God of Khakhuli] (Tbilisi, 1972); for the best images: L.Z. Khuskivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* (Tbilisi, 1984), figs 16, 39–70, 73–105; for a recent attempt to group the individual enamels: T. Papamastorakis, 'Re-deconstructing the Khakhuli triptych', *DChAE* 4, 23 (2002): pp. 225–51.

62 Amiranashvili, *Beka Opizari*, pp. 9, 24–7, figs 9–26.

One other example from Zarzma shows that the icon of the Transfiguration was not the only one there to be supplemented by a frame. Other members of the Laklakisdze family, responsible for the rhipidion, commissioned a new cover for an icon of the Theotokos Eleousa in the monastery. As with the Transfiguration icon, the original painted panel is lost, but the revetment and frame survive. The frame surrounded the holy couple with scenes from both their lives: ten from Christ's life across the top and sides, and five from Mary's across the bottom (Fig. 5.6).⁶³ It is interesting to note that the representation of the Transfiguration on the left side of the frame owed nothing to the more famous icon in the monastery; rather its depiction of Christ and the prophets together inside one mandorla looked to a different tradition stretching back to the image in Basil I's copy of the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzos (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Grec. 510, fol. 75r). The donation is recorded around the inner edge of the frame: 'O Holy Queen, intercede before your son and our saviour for all members of the Laklakisdze family: for Mirian, *eristav* of *eristavs*, for Khurtsik, for the sons of Khurtsik, Mirian, Sasan, Kurdia [?] [and] Sch-s [?]. I, the wretched Epraksia, mother of Khurtsik and Mirian, adorned [this icon] as a prayer for all Laklakis, in memory of my soul.'⁶⁴ The icon is a reminder that the Transfiguration was not the sole focus of veneration in the monastery at Zarzma, and that the cult of the Theotokos Eleousa seems to have supplemented it. Bissera Pentcheva has suggested that the Eleousa may well have emerged in the later eleventh century in association with funerary contexts.⁶⁵ It therefore seems likely that the icon here is an import into the existing cult of the Transfiguration at Zarzma, to emphasize the commemorative role of the main church at the monastery as a site for the memory of the Laklakisdze family. The Laklakisdze family do not appear in the main historical chronicles of Georgia, but their epigraphic association with Zarzma and its icons indicates their local importance in Samtskhe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Their dominance also further underlines the way in which monasteries could be effectively taken over for spiritual wellbeing of individual families.

The date of the metalwork on the Eleousa icon is controversial. Most Georgian scholars have dated both the central revetment and the frame to the early eleventh century, suggesting that it is contemporaneous to the rhipidion, which would then have been commissioned by closely related members of the Laklakisdze family and possibly made by the same artist. But a comparison of the dynamic angel of the Annunciation on the icon frame with his flowing robes, and the etiolated angels with their pinched waists on the rhipidion certainly shows that the two objects cannot have been produced by the same

63 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, pp. 194–212, figs 203–5; for details of all the scenes: G. Abramishvili and A. Javakhishvili, *Jewellery and Metalwork in the Museums of Georgia* (Leningrad, 1986), figs 137–50.

64 Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo*, pp. 195–6.

65 Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, pp. 177–80.



Fig. 5.6 Icon of the Laklakidze Theotokos of Zarzma, eleventh or twelfth century (courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi. © Georgian National Museum).

hand.⁶⁶ More recently, Ivan Bentchev has argued that the frame at least must be a creation of the twelfth century, and the iconographic parallels he draws are convincing.⁶⁷ The later date also fits much better with the development of frames in both Georgian and Byzantine art.

⁶⁶ R. Mepisashvili and V. Cincadze, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia* (London, 1979), pp. 226–7.

⁶⁷ Bentchev, 'Zu den georgischen Gottesmutterikonen', pp. 243–4, basing his argument on details of the iconography, such as the slumped pose of Christ in the Crucifixion and his

The fragmentary state of the frame of the Zarzma Transfiguration icon means that it is difficult to pursue further the ways in which the frame acted to reinterpret the central, miraculous image. The Deesis in the centre of the top of the frame acts as a small reminder of prayer and intercession, but the other panels suggest a desire to re-emphasize the narrative aspect of the original icon. Whilst this move would seem to go against all the earlier veneration of the icon, as the examples above show, it fitted in closely with a change in the veneration of icons in Georgia in the twelfth century. It would seem that in this last phase of the icon's history at Zarzma, before the Ottoman raids forced it to flee to Shemokmedi where its condition slowly deteriorated over the next four hundred years, the status of the Transfiguration had developed far from the original wonder-working panel that Serapion had carried with him in the ninth century.

The history of the icon of the Transfiguration of Zarzma, which can be traced through the *Life* of Serapion and the different phases of the icon's revetment, covers approximately three centuries. Over that time the appearance of the icon changed enormously, as did its status and power. The addition of the revetment and its ever-increasing elaboration inevitably shifted the focus of attention away from the painted surface of the icon to its gilded silver cover. Indeed, it is easy when viewing the icon today, to forget that it ever had a painted image underneath. This is compounded by the revetment's place in the history of Georgian art, where it inevitably appears as the cornerstone on which all later metalwork depends.⁶⁸ As the earliest major piece of Georgian metalwork, all art historical literature tends to concentrate on the cover's stylistic and technical innovativeness, rather than the religious significance of the actual icon that had so influenced Serapion and his followers. There is a sense in which the power of the icon has transferred itself from the wood into the metal, echoing the replication of power between the Mandylion and the Keramion.⁶⁹ A rationale such as this must partially have lain behind the decision to preserve the cover when the underlying miraculous panel was finally lost, discarded or destroyed. At that point, the revetment – without any faces to authenticate the likenesses of the figures depicted – should surely have lost its efficacy as an icon and reverted simply to its constituent metals. Despite this, generations of monks at Shemokmedi monastery preserved and cared for it before it was finally transferred to the Museum of Fine Arts in Tbilisi. For them, the cover had become the icon. This transfer of power from icon to cover is still evident today, and the Zarzma icon cover remains a potent religious and art historical object in Georgia, jointly owned by church and state.

crossed legs in the Baptism that only appear elsewhere in the twelfth century.

68 Mepisashvili, Cincadze, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia*, pp. 225–6.

69 H.L. Kessler, 'Configuring the invisible by copying the Holy Face', in H.L. Kessler and G. Wolf (eds), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, pp. 146–9.

The survival and veneration of the revetment reveals the inherently ambiguous nature of these objects. As covers they are simply envelopes to protect the icon within, so emphasizing the importance of what they conceal. Yet, the very act of covering transfers much of the icon's impact onto the revetment. At the same time, the way in which the cover re-presents the icon allows it to change the nature of the original panel. It permitted changes in style, details of iconography and overall visual appearance. More significantly additions to the cover, whether in the form of inscriptions or additional scenes on the frame, allowed the central image to be placed in a new functional context or even co-opted for the salvation of particular individuals. The new messages and meanings that the revetment conveyed truly transformed the Transfiguration.

Messages in Context: The Reading of Sermons in Byzantine Churches and Monasteries

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It is common knowledge among scholars that many early Christian and Byzantine homilies underwent changes in the course of their transmission. From their first delivery to a congregation, often in an informal, extempore form, through careful editing, and finally publication either in a volume devoted to one preacher's work or in a collection of multi-authored texts intended for liturgical use in churches and monasteries, homilies and festal sermons experienced, as it were, a multitude of incarnations.¹ Unfortunately, owing to the limited number of surviving manuscripts, we often only have access to a single version of a homiletic text. It is always worth asking whether this represents its first appearance, perhaps reflecting stenographic notes taken by a member of the congregation, or a revised and edited version of the text. In addition to this consideration, we should bear in mind that many – if not most – of the Byzantine sermons that survive also reflect their final destiny, as readings that were assigned in monastic and ecclesiastical *typika* for specific days and offices in the liturgical calendar.

Since the relationship between the extempore delivery of sermons in church and their development into more literary forms has already received some attention from scholars,² it is the purpose of this article to explore the role of patristic sermons as readings in the Byzantine Church from the ninth century onwards. This is the period in which, according to Albert Ehrhard, the liturgical books in which both homilies and saints' lives were henceforth

1 For some approaches to this question: P. Allen and M.B. Cunningham (eds), *Preacher and Audience. Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Leiden, Boston and Cologne, 1998); B. Goodall, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom on the Letters of St Paul to Titus and Philemon. Prolegomena to an Edition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1979); A. Olivar, *La Predicación Christiana Antigua* (Barcelona, 1991), esp. Pt. II, chs ii–xii, pp. 515–878.

2 See especially Goodall, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom*.

transmitted began to be compiled in large numbers.³ Various questions present themselves in relation to this topic, which I hope have some connection with the title of this commemorative volume in honour of Professor Leslie Brubaker. Firstly, is there anything to be learned by examining which sermons were chosen for particular liturgical slots, as revealed by the surviving monastic collections and *typika*? Secondly, to what extent did changing liturgical (or even extra-liturgical) contexts affect the reception of these texts? Finally, if early and middle Byzantine sermons continued to be read in churches and monasteries in later centuries did they continue to have the same meaning for congregations?⁴ It is important to emphasize that this article represents a first attempt at answering these questions and should therefore be viewed as work in progress. Most importantly, however, I hope that it will reinforce the point that Byzantine homilies and sermons offered listeners, in primarily oral contexts, a vision of truth that was eternal and unchanging. It was in fact the focus on scriptural revelation and the lack of topical references that ensured the enduring appeal of many sermons, whether these took the form of extempore orations, written texts, or liturgical readings, throughout the Byzantine era.

Before beginning this investigation, it is worth providing a brief overview of the Byzantine homiletic tradition.⁵ This tradition is characterized by a variety of literary forms, including simple exegetical homilies, panegyric and festal sermons, and orations intended for particular occasions, such as Photios' sermon in honour of the unveiling of the mosaic of the Virgin in the Great Church in 867.⁶ These various genres display different literary styles: whereas exegetical homilies are usually written in a 'lower', more colloquial style, festal and panegyric sermons may employ conventional rhetorical forms

3 A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche* (3 vols, Leipzig, 1936–39), vol. 1, p. 54. Ehrhard traces the beginnings of widespread compilation of liturgical manuscripts (containing both homiletic and hagiographical texts) to the eighth century, although isolated examples from an even earlier period do survive.

4 The terms 'early', 'middle' and 'late' for eras in Byzantine history are problematic but convenient. In the context of homiletics, I am using 'early' and 'middle' to refer to sermons written from approximately the fourth through seventh, and eighth through and tenth centuries, respectively; as stated above, liturgical evidence for homiletic readings in churches and monasteries only survives from the ninth century onward. On the periodization of Byzantine history: A. Kazhdan, 'Byzantium, History of', *ODB* vol. 1, pp. 345–62.

5 Fuller introductions to the subject may be found in T. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), pp. 95–115; M.B. Cunningham, 'Preaching and the community', in R. Morris (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium* (Birmingham, 1990), pp. 29–47; *eadem*, 'Homilies', in E. Jeffreys, with J. Haldon and R. Cormack (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 872–81.

6 C. Mango (trans.), *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958), pp. 279–96.

and devices, complex vocabulary, and poetic imagery.⁷ To some extent, it is possible to detect a shift in preference for one or the other homiletic form between the early and middle Byzantine periods, although this may reflect later accidents in transmission. However, it is possible to state that whereas a larger proportion of informal homilies appear in the earlier period (c. fourth–seventh centuries), the middle and later Byzantine periods are characterized by works that were either delivered, or reworked later, in a ‘higher’ or more literary form. Another notable feature of the middle and late Byzantine homiletic tradition is the preponderance of festal sermons that survive. These include orations for long-established Dominical feast-days such as Christmas and Theophany, but also the Marian feasts that had been added to the calendar between the sixth and eighth centuries. Called either *logoi* or *enkomia* in the manuscripts that transmit them, the chief purpose of festal homilies is to celebrate the day on which an event or holy person is commemorated. By the early eighth century, the genre was fully formed, drawing its inspiration most noticeably from the great festal orations of Gregory of Nazianzos (c.329–90), but also incorporating many other elements.

Later liturgical collections and monastic *typika* suggest that by about the end of the ninth century, a canon of homiletic and hagiographical texts had begun to be established for each day of both the fixed and moveable liturgical cycles. This is evidenced by the inclusion of mainly patristic and middle Byzantine texts as readings for the daily and festal offices. Although the works of later preachers and hagiographers were occasionally included, and were certainly also treasured, these may arguably be viewed as additions to an already established tradition. The nineteenth kanon of the Quinisext Council in Trullo (A.D. 681/2) attests to the existence of a patristic canon of texts when it enjoins preachers not to interpret scripture ‘otherwise than as the luminaries and teachers of the Church have expounded it in their own writings; and let them glory in these rather than compose their own orations, lest they depart from what is fitting through their own lack of experience’.⁸ It is clear from this passage that the reading of patristic sermons occasionally took the place of original preaching even as early as the late seventh century. From the ninth century or so, when collections of liturgical readings began to

7 In referring to ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ literary styles, I am following the definitions suggested by I. Ševčenko in his classic article, ‘Levels of style in Byzantine prose’, *JÖB* 31, 1, 1 (1981): pp. 289–312.

8 ‘... ἢ ὡς ἂν οἱ τῆς ἐκκλησίας φωστῆρες καὶ διδάσκαλοι διὰ τῶν οἰκείων συγγραμμάτων παρέθεντο· καὶ μᾶλλον ἐν τούτοις εὐδοκιμεῖτωσαν, ἢ λόγους οἰκείους συντάττοντες, ἔστιν ὅτε πρὸς τοῦτο ἀπόρως ἔχοντες, ἀποπίπτοιεν τοῦ προσήκοντος...’ G. Alberigo et al. (eds), *Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta. Editio critica I: The Oecumenical Councils from Nicaea I to Nicaea II (325–787)* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 244–5.

be compiled, we may surmise that the practice had become commonplace not only in churches, but also in monasteries, throughout the Byzantine Empire.⁹

Owing to the fact that my own research has focused recently on eighth-century Marian sermons, I have chosen to focus on the transmission of this corpus in the discussion that follows.¹⁰ Before exploring which of these texts were chosen as liturgical readings, and the possible reasons why, however, it is necessary to describe briefly this collection of festal sermons. The preachers who composed these texts between about the beginning and the middle of the eighth century include Andrew of Crete,¹¹ John of Damascus,¹² Germanos of Constantinople,¹³ and John of Euboea.¹⁴ As far as we know, these bishops or priests flourished in places as far apart as Crete, Palestine, Constantinople, and mainland Greece. Their festal sermons, although focusing on the scriptural or apocryphal stories of the Virgin's infancy and later life, are also diverse, even though they demonstrate a shared rhetorical tradition and understanding of christological doctrine.

To take a few examples, we may compare Andrew of Crete's four sermons on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.¹⁵ The first of these texts is a rhetorical *tour de force* in which the preacher, employing ornate, high-style language, places the Theotokos within God's entire dispensation for humankind. Andrew's second and third sermons for the same feast, on the other hand, are somewhat tedious examples of rambling pedagogy. The preacher is concerned

9 For a discussion and list of the manuscript evidence: Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, vols 1–3.

10 I wish to acknowledge here the debt that I owe to Leslie Brubaker, who secured a grant from the AHRC for the exploration of this topic between 2003–2006. This allowed me to work exclusively the cult of the Virgin Mary during the iconoclast period, with special reference to the homiletic evidence, within the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity at the University of Birmingham.

11 Andrew of Crete was born c.A.D. 660 and died in 740. He was consecrated archbishop of Gortyna, Crete, sometime between 692 and 713: S. Vailhé, 'Saint André de Crète', *Échos d'Orient* 5 (1901–1902): pp. 378–87; M.B. Cunningham, 'Andrew of Crete: a high-style preacher of the eighth century', in *eadem* and Allen (eds), *Preacher and Audience*, pp. 267–93.

12 John of Damascus' dates are very uncertain, but may be c.A.D. 650/655–750: A. Louth, *St John Damascene. Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 5–6.

13 Germanos was born sometime between c.A.D. 630 and 650 and died in 733. He served as patriarch of Constantinople from 715–30, being deposed by Leo III for his iconophile position: L. Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I. von Konstantinopel (715–730)* (Würzburg, 1975); J. List, *Studien zur Homiletik Germanos I. von Konstantinopel und seine Zeit* (Athens, 1939).

14 John of Euboea's dates are unknown, but he does say in his homily on the Massacre of the Innocents that he is writing 742 years after the event, in other words, c.744 years after the birth of Christ: John of Euboea, *In sanctos innocentes*, PG 96:1472. For further discussion of John's life and writings: F. Dölger, 'Iohannes von Euboea', *Analecta Bollandiana* 68 (1950): pp. 5–26; D. Stiernon, 'Jean d'Eubée', *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (1974), vol. 8, p. 487; F. Halkin, 'La passion de Ste Parascève par Jean d'Eubée', in P. Wirth (ed.), *Polychronion. Festschrift für Franz Dölger* (Heidelberg, 1966), pp. 231–7.

15 CPG 8170–73; PG 97:805–881; trans. M.B. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven. Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, New York, 2008), pp. 71–138.

to prove that Mary, like Joseph, was descended from David, although this is not explicitly stated by either Matthew (1:2–17) or Luke (3:23–38) in their genealogies. The fourth sermon, on the other hand, offers praise to the holy subject, adopting an almost hymnic style that employs sections of *chairetismoi*, strings of types, and poetic epithets. Texts commemorating other Marian feast-days, including the Virgin's Presentation (or Entry) into the Temple, Conception, Annunciation, and Dormition, reveal similar variations in style and content. Andrew of Crete's and Germanos of Constantinople's homilies on the Annunciation,¹⁶ following a long tradition of dialogic treatment of this subject, present dramatic re-enactments of this important event.¹⁷ The sermon on the Conception of the Virgin by a less well-known preacher, John of Euboea, contrasts with the sophisticated works of his contemporaries: written in an unpretentious style, it is nevertheless interesting, with excurses on Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, and on Old Testament prophecy and typology.¹⁸

With respect to the performance of festal sermons at the time of their first delivery, the evidence that these could be preached in a number of liturgical contexts including divine liturgies, all-night vigils, and offices is compelling.¹⁹ It is surprising that the later *typika*, beginning with that of the Great Church, do not provide explicit references to sermons in their rubrics,²⁰ but it is impossible to doubt that preaching continued to take place in liturgical settings throughout the Byzantine period.

Let us turn now to the main subject of this investigation, namely, what may be called the 'afterlife' of sermons. As Albert Ehrhard has shown in his monumental three-volume study of the extant Byzantine liturgical collections containing saints' lives and sermons, many of these texts experienced a second life as 'readings' in Byzantine churches and monasteries.²¹ The majority of earlier sermons, at least those composed before about the end of the ninth century, are transmitted in mixed collections, arranged according to the liturgical year, known as *panegyrika*. Some, including especially the texts intended for the moveable period extending from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee through Easter to Pentecost, are collected into books which Ehrhard

16 CPG 8174 and 8009 respectively; PG 97:881–913; PG 98:320–340; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, pp. 197–246.

17 For an interesting discussion of their contrasting literary techniques: A. Kazhdan with L.F. Sherry and C. Angelidi, *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)* (Athens, 1999), pp. 61–4.

18 CPG 8135–8; PG 86:1460–1508; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, pp. 173–95.

19 Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, pp. 97–100.

20 I have commented on this fact before, and remain perplexed by it. The possibility that such *typika* reflect the fact that sermons were no longer preached during or after the divine liturgy was argued by E. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford, 1949, 2nd ed., 1961), pp. 366–7 and in Cunningham, 'Preaching and the community', p. 30; However, Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, pp. 98–9 has provided examples of occasions when sermons are known to have been delivered during the divine liturgy.

21 Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, passim.

calls 'homiliaries'. The choice of readings for each day in the liturgical year appears, as far as we can tell, to be dictated by individual scribes or perhaps their patrons or spiritual directors. What is remarkable when comparing the hundreds of liturgical books that survive is their diversity: the coverage of feast-days, number of readings assigned to each day, and choice of readings varies almost as much as the number of manuscripts.

The information that such collections provide about later readers and commissioners of manuscripts has already attracted the attention of a few scholars. Claudia Rapp has studied a group of six late Byzantine manuscripts which contain exclusively the Lives of holy women, drawing interesting conclusions about their possible audiences or owners.²² Nancy Ševčenko has explored the transmission of metaphrastic *menologia* and their impact on artists developing the iconography for individual saints.²³ The only proviso which must be kept firmly in mind when drawing conclusions about manuscripts and their potential audiences is that which applies to most other aspects of Byzantine Studies, namely the fact that the surviving evidence probably represents only a fraction of the number that originally existed.

The second strand of evidence to be considered is that provided by the surviving *typika*. Many of these texts, especially those known as the 'liturgical *typika*' or '*synaxaria*', provide precise information about the contexts in which sermons, as well as saints' lives, should be read aloud. Although some of these, such as the tenth-century *Typikon of the Great Church*²⁴ are, as we saw earlier, extremely economical in their rubrics, others, such as the eleventh-century *Synaxarion* of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis in Constantinople²⁵ and the twelfth-century one from Messina in Sicily,²⁶ explain not only where in the offices such readings take place, but also which texts should be used. If we combine the evidence offered both by the surviving liturgical manuscripts and by the *typika*, we should be able to determine which homilies were considered most appropriate as readings in later centuries. On the basis of this information it may be possible to draw some conclusions concerning the nature of liturgical readings, why and when these took place, and what audiences were likely to

22 Of the six manuscripts used in this study, four are dated to the fourteenth century, one to the fifteenth, and the last carries the date of 1616: C. Rapp, 'Figures of female sanctity: Byzantine edifying manuscripts and their audience,' *DOP* 50 (1996): pp. 313–44; for a description of the manuscripts, see esp. pp. 317–20.

23 N.P. Ševčenko, 'The vita icon and the painter as hagiographer,' *DOP* 53 (1999): p. 161, n. 53.

24 See J. Mateos (ed.), *Le Typicon de la Grande Église. Ms. Sainte-Croix no. 40, Xe siècle. I. Le cycle des douze mois; II. Le cycle des fêtes mobiles* (2 vols, Rome, 1962–63).

25 A. Dmitrievskij (ed.), *Opisanie liturgiceskikh rukopisej* (2 vols, Kiev, 1895; repr. Hildesheim, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 256–614; R.H. Jordan, (trans.), *The Synaxarion of the Monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis* (2 vols, Belfast, 2000–2005). (Hereafter, reference will be made only to the Jordan translation, since this also provides the Greek text.)

26 M. Arranz (ed.), *Le typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine* (Rome, 1969).

have heard them. It should be noted at the outset of this investigation, however, that the evidence concerning liturgical readings in monasteries (in the form of both *typika* and liturgical collections) is much more abundant than that concerning parish churches or cathedrals. Thus, this preliminary study will inevitably provide more answers in relation to monastic audiences than it will to lay, or non-religious, ones.

Focusing then on Marian feast-days, let us examine first the readings that are chosen for the Nativity of the Virgin, celebrated on 8 September. According to Ehrhard, most surviving liturgical manuscripts contain between one and three texts for this feast. The more commonly chosen texts are the second-century *Protevangelion of James*,²⁷ any of Andrew of Crete's four sermons (CPG 8170–73), and John of Damascus' oration on the same subject (CPG 8060).²⁸ Turning to the *Synaxarion* of the Evergetis Monastery, this prescribes John of Damascus' sermon after the dismissal (*apolyxis*) of the office of *pannychis*, and in *orthros*, three that are normally attributed to Andrew of Crete, as well as the *Protevangelion of James*.²⁹ The Messina *Typikon*, on the other hand, asks for Andrew of Crete's first sermon near the beginning of the service and, after it has ended, Leo VI's sermon,³⁰ followed by the *Protevangelion*.³¹

Turning to the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin into the Temple, the liturgical collections prefer the middle Byzantine preachers; this is not surprising if we consider that this feast was only introduced into the liturgical calendar at the beginning of the eighth century.³² Germanos of Constantinople, George

27 E. de Strycker, S.J. (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques. Recherches sur le papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée* (Brussels, 1961).

28 Although its most recent editor has doubted the authenticity of this homily, it is a work of outstanding rhetorical quality; in my own recent work, I have decided to accept its attribution to John. See B. Kotter, OSB (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* (5 vols, Berlin and New York, 1988), vol. 5, pp. 324–47; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, pp. 44–5, 53–70.

29 Jordan, *The Synaxarion*, vol. 1, pp. 28–31.

30 Akakios, Λέοντος τοῦ σοφοῦ παννυγητικοὶ [sic] λόγοι (Athens, 1868), pp. 110–17; PG 107:1–12. See Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, pp. 162–4. Emperor Leo VI ('the Wise') reigned from A.D. 886–912.

31 Arranz, *Le typikon*, p. 19.

32 On the possible date for the introduction of the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin into the Byzantine liturgical calendar: S. Vaillhé, 'La fête de la présentation de Marie au temple,' *Échos d'Orient* 5 (1901–1902): pp. 221–4; H. Chirat, 'Les origines de la fête du 21 novembre: St Jean Chrysostome et St André de Crète ont-ils célébré la Présentation de la Théotocos?', *Psomia Diaphora, Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyons, 1945), pp. 121–34; Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, pp. 24–6; D. Krausmüller, 'Making the most of Mary: the cult of the Virgin in the Chalkoprateia from late antiquity to the tenth century', in L. Brubaker and M.B. Cunningham (eds), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Aldershot, forthcoming).

of Nikomedeia,³³ and the patriarch Tarasios³⁴ feature most prominently in the various types of liturgical collection, with a monk Michael and the early tenth-century patriarch Euthymios making an occasional appearance.³⁵ In *orthros* at the Monastery of Evergetis, one of George of Nikomedeia's sermons ('... look in the first small *panegyrikon*', states the *Synaxarion*) is read, separated by a large section of the office,³⁶ while 'two small homilies' of Proklos³⁷ and Germanos follow the kontakion after the sixth ode of the kanon.³⁸ At Messina, sermons of George of Nikomedeia feature (here the scribe points his readers in the direction of the November metaphrastic collection for the texts), followed by a reading by Leo VI after the sixth ode of the kanon.³⁹ This, states the scribe, may be found in the special collection of the emperor's writings.⁴⁰

The feast of the Conception of the Virgin (or, as the rubrics usually call it, of Saint Anna) scarcely ever features in liturgical collections of any type. When it does appear, sermons by the late ninth- early tenth-century preachers, George of Nikomedeia or the patriarch Euthymios, are usually included. The Conception, commemorated on 9 December from about the early eighth century onwards, never came to equal the Virgin's other main feast-days in the Orthodox Church, although it did eventually receive considerable emphasis in the West in spite of some opposition to this trend. The various Byzantine *typika* do, on the other hand, cite this feast as the major *commemoration* of the day. According to the *Typikon of the Great Church*, the *synaxis* was celebrated at the sanctuary of the Mother of God in the quarter of the Evouranoi, near the Great Church.⁴¹ Both Evergetis and Messina choose a sermon by George of Nikomedeia, although the former also includes the *Martyrion* of Saint Menas, chosen presumably from the *menologion* for this month.⁴²

33 George was metropolitan of Nikomedeia from c.860: B. Baldwin, 'George of Nikomedeia', *ODB* vol. 2, p. 838.

34 Tarasios was patriarch of Constantinople between 784 and 806. For his homily on the Presentation of the Virgin into the Temple: *PG* 100:1481–500.

35 Euthymios was patriarch between 907 and May 912. The attribution of sermons to Euthymios in some manuscripts may not be correct, but he probably did write two festal sermons on the Conception of Saint Anna and on the Virgin Mary: M. Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines* (2 vols, Paris, 1922; repr. Brepols, 2003), vol. 1, pp. 463–514; *idem*, *Homélies mariales byzantines* (2 vols, Paris, 1926; Turnhout, 1990), vol. 2, pp. 441–55.

36 *PG* 100:1401–1456.

37 That is, Proklos of Constantinople (c.A.D. 390–446), who was patriarch between 434 and 446: N. Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity. Homilies 1–5, Texts and Translations* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), pp. 7–124.

38 Jordan, *The Synaxarion*, vol. 1, pp. 220–21.

39 Akakios, λέοντος τοῦ σοφοῦ πανυγητικοί [sic] λόγοι, pp. 139–45; *PG* 107:12–21; Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, pp. 164–6.

40 Arranz, *Le typicon*, p. 60.

41 Mateos, *Le typicon de la Grande Église*, vol. 1, p. 127. For information on this church: R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine. Développement urbain et repertoire topographique* (2nd ed., Paris, 1964), p. 350.

42 Jordan, *The Synaxarion*, vol. 1, pp. 264–7; Arranz, *Le typicon*, p. 68.

The feast of the Annunciation is one of the most significant festivals in the liturgical calendar after Easter and Christmas. This is the day when the incarnation of Christ, and thus the salvation of humankind, is inaugurated. Church Fathers from the fourth century onward commemorated the event in poetic homilies and hymns, frequently employing dialogue in order to convey the dramatic encounter between Mary and the archangel Gabriel on this important day. Although the feast of the Annunciation was probably only established on 25 March during the reign of Justinian (527–65),⁴³ many of the texts assigned as liturgical readings had been written a century or two earlier. One problem with the corpus of sermons that deal with the theme of the Annunciation is that many of these texts are spurious.⁴⁴ The two sermons ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgos,⁴⁵ as well as those attributed to Basil of Seleukeia,⁴⁶ the patriarch Athanasios,⁴⁷ and Proklos,⁴⁸ await definitive studies with regard to their provenance and authorship. It is likely that many of these texts in fact belong to between the late fifth and seventh centuries.⁴⁹

The feast is assigned readings in liturgical manuscripts of all kinds, including even those that deal primarily with the moveable calendar. Although many different texts are chosen, it is striking that the most popular text is a short homily which is normally assigned to John Chrysostom,⁵⁰ but also occasionally to Gregory Thaumaturgos⁵¹ (hereafter CPG 4519).⁵² Other

43 According to a homily on the Annunciation by Abramios of Ephesos (CPG 7380), dated before 553, the feast had been introduced recently: Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, p. 167, n. 37.

44 For orientation on this subject: P. Allen, 'Portrayals of Mary in Greek homiletic literature (6th–7th centuries)', in L. Brubaker and M. Cunningham (eds), *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium*.

45 CPG 1775–6; PG 10:1145–1156 and 1156–1169.

46 Basil became archbishop of Seleukeia in approximately 448 and died after c.468. This homily is listed as CPG 6681; it is edited in PG 85:1776–1792.

47 Athanasios, bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 328–35, 337–9, 346–56, 362, and 364–73. This homily, which is almost certainly inauthentic, is listed as CPG 2268; it is edited in PG 28:917–940.

48 CPG 5805; F.J. Leroy, *L'homilétique de Proklos de Constantinople. Tradition manuscrite, inédits, études connexes* (Vatican City, 1967), pp. 298–324.

49 See Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, pp. 168–9, n. 52–6.

50 Saint John Chrysostom lived between c.347 and 407. Much secondary literature exists on this important figure, but the authenticity of many homilies attributed to him is dubious. For the authentic homilies: CPG 4305–5197.

51 Gregory lived between approximately 213 and 270. For a discussion of the Marian homilies that are ascribed to him: M. Jugie, 'Les homélies mariales attribuées à S. Grégoire le Thaumaturge', *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 19 (1929): pp. 86–95.

52 CPG 4519; PG 10:1172–1177; PG 50:791–796. Although ascribed to George Thaumaturgos or John Chrysostom in many manuscripts, most scholars regard this as a fifth-century oration displaying the 'asianic' style of preaching employed by Proklos of Constantinople and others. This style is characterized above all by short rhythmic phrases, creating a staccato effect: G.A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 95–6. For arguments for and against Proklos' authorship of this homily: Leroy,

popular sermons include those by Andrew of Crete and several others that are attributed to John Chrysostom. It is noticeable, however, that Germanos of Constantinople's dialogic sermon for this feast is almost never included and that, in comparison with the sermons that have already been mentioned, it survives in a relatively small number of manuscripts dating from after the eleventh century.⁵³

Both the Evergetis and Messina monasteries appoint, as readings for the feast of the Annunciation, a selection of sermons which correspond more or less to those that appear in most of the surviving liturgical collections. Both choose *CPG* 4519, as well as texts by Andrew of Crete and pseudo-Gregory Thaumaturgos. The feast of the Annunciation was also celebrated in Constantinople and in outlying monasteries with processions and a relaxation of the Lenten fast. At the Monastery of the Evergetis, the monks, carrying the cross, the Gospel, and candles, circled the entire monastery before stopping at the main doors of the church where they sang, 'Rejoice, gate of God', in honour of the Theotokos.⁵⁴ This took place at about the fifth hour, just before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.⁵⁵ According to the *Typikon of the Great Church*, a stational liturgy also took place in the centre of Constantinople on this great feast, starting at Hagia Sophia and ending at the church of the Chalkoprateia, with a stop at the forum of Constantine.⁵⁶ Celebrations varied slightly depending on whether the feast fell on another important day in Lent or Holy Week, but based on this tenth-century witness, this remains the basic format.

Finally, the feast of the Dormition inspires a fairly predictable choice of readings in the surviving liturgical manuscripts. Owing to the relatively late institution of this festival at the end of the sixth century, the bulk of sermons written in its honour were composed in the eighth and ninth centuries. Germanos of Constantinople, John of Damascus, and Andrew of Crete all produced trilogies, that is, groups of three sermons which were originally read out in succession in the course of all-night vigils. The liturgical manuscripts contain different combinations of these, but it is noticeable that they are rarely transmitted in their original threefold order. Certain texts, usually the first in such a set, are chosen more frequently. Occasionally, we

L'homilétique de Proklos de Constantinople, pp. 270–71; R. Caro, *La Homiletica Mariana Griega en el siglo V* (3 vols, Dayton, Ohio), vol. 2, pp. 511–22.

53 In fact, I have counted 59 manuscripts in all, but this is a relatively small number compared to the hundreds in which more popular sermons often survive. Although there is one eleventh-century witness (Athos, Cod. Lavra Γ117 [357] and one twelfth-century example (Lyon, Cod. 51 [542]), the remaining manuscripts date from the thirteenth century and later, with the bulk of them being post-fifteenth century. I am currently preparing a new edition of this sermon.

54 This is of course a reference to the closed east gate of the temple (Ezekiel 44:1–3), a standard type for the Mother of God which signifies her perpetual virginity.

55 Jordan, *The Synaxarion*, vol. 2, pp. 34–5.

56 Mateos, *Le typicon de la Grande Église*, vol. 1, pp. 254–5.

also find the earlier, more narrative sermon by John of Thessaloniki,⁵⁷ but overall, the early eighth-century preachers dominate this day in the various types of liturgical collections. The monastic *typika* are somewhat enigmatic concerning the readings for this feast. Whereas the Evergetis *Typikon* calls for 'all the readings for the feast in the *panegyrikon*' to be read after the festal *kathisma* at the beginning of *orthros*, followed by sermons by Andrew of Crete and John Chrysostom in the course of the canon,⁵⁸ Messina assigns readings from John of Damascus and Leo VI.⁵⁹

What possible conclusions may be drawn from this codicological and liturgical evidence? With regard to the timing of liturgical reading, it is clear that this took place almost exclusively in the context of the early morning office, *orthros*. In the course of festal celebrations, *orthros* would have followed the offices of vespers and *pannychis*, thus forming part of an all-night vigil. In order to fill the long hours before the break of day, it is possible that the reading of sermons took place precisely because it took a great deal of time. We should not forget, of course, that festal homilies also provide instruction, praise, and inspiration in ways that biblical readings, prayers, and hymns do not. It is also important to note the exact placement of readings in the context of the morning office. Sometimes set just after the first *kathisma* and before the reading of the Gospel, and sometimes between odes, usually the sixth and seventh, in the canon towards the end of the service, patristic sermons must have been chosen because of their special relevance to these liturgical contexts.

One other occasion for homiletic reading in monasteries, which has not been mentioned so far, is at mealtimes in the refectory. This practice is described in the numerous surviving *typika*, which describe the daily running of monasteries as well as their liturgical observances. In the ninth- or tenth-century *Typikon* of the Monastery of Stoudios, for example, the anonymous author relates that the monks remain silent while readings are taking place at the midday meal.⁶⁰ The session ends when all of the monks toss their spoons onto their plates after the last serving.⁶¹ Unfortunately, Stoudios, like most other monastic rules, does not specify exactly what these refectory readings were. It seems likely that they consisted of homiletic or hagiographical texts assigned to each day of the liturgical year and contained in the same panegyric and metaphrastic collections that were employed in the church services.

57 John of Thessaloniki CPG 2924; Jugie, *Homélies mariales byzantines*, vol. 2, pp. 375–405; B.E. Daley, S.J. (trans.), *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, New York, 1998), pp. 47–67.

58 Jordan, *The Synaxarion*, vol. 2, pp. 260–63.

59 Arranz, *Le typicon*, p. 180.

60 For a discussion of the possible date and authorship of this monastic *typikon*, which survives in various versions: J. Thomas and A.C. Hero (eds), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 35 (5 vols, Washington, D.C., 2000), vol. 1, pp. 90–91.

61 Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 1, p. 109.

Returning to the choice of readings in *orthros* and confining ourselves to the Marian festivals described earlier, we may draw several conclusions. First, it is worth stating again that more than one sermon is usually read in the morning office on important feast-days. Nevertheless, as we noted earlier, the trilogies written mainly by the early eighth-century preachers, John of Damascus, Germanos, and Andrew of Crete, are rarely kept together in this context. Instead we see a creative process of selection taking place and are left to wonder whether this reflects the choice of individual bishops, abbots, or the scribes responsible for compiling liturgical collections. The monastic *typika* usually call these collections 'panegyrika', but texts may sometimes be sought in 'metaphrastic' collections as well.

As for the texts, most, as we have noted, date from before the end of the ninth century. Feast-days such as the Presentation of the Virgin into the Temple or the Dormition are commemorated by post-seventh-century texts, owing to their late adoption in the liturgical calendar, whereas long-standing Dominical feasts such as Christmas or Easter usually feature the works of the great fourth-century orators, Gregory of Nazianzos, Basil of Caesarea, and John Chrysostom. These authors must surely be among those great 'luminaries and teachers' to whom the nineteenth kanon of the council of Trullo alludes.⁶² It is perhaps surprising that preachers of later centuries, many of whom wrote eloquent and highly influential sermons, are not generally included in the mixed liturgical collections, even though many recensions of these were compiled in the later centuries of the Byzantine Empire. As Ehrhard has shown, it was common for the sermons of many later writers, beginning with Photios and Leo VI, to be gathered into what he calls 'special collections', in other words, manuscripts devoted solely to these authors' literary productions.⁶³ Sometimes, although not often, these preachers' writings would be issued in a deluxe edition with illustrations, as happened in the case of the twelfth-century monk, James Kokkinovaphos.⁶⁴

Is it possible to draw conclusions about tastes in liturgical or monastic reading on the basis of the surviving evidence? In the case of the feast of the Annunciation, for example, one sermon features more frequently than all of the others in the liturgical collections: that which is ascribed variously to John Chrysostom or Gregory Thaumaturgos (CPG 4519).⁶⁵ Why was this reading chosen so much more frequently than, for example, Germanos' great dialogic

62 See above, n. 8.

63 Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand*, vol. 3, pp. 523–722.

64 J.C. Anderson, 'The illustrated sermons of James the Monk: their dates, order and place in the history of Byzantine art', *Viator* 22 (1991): pp. 69–120; I. Hutter and P. Canart, *Das Marienhomiliar des Mönchs Jakobos von Kokkinobaphos, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1162* (Vatican City, 1991); K. Linardou, *Reading two Byzantine illustrated books. The Kokkinobaphos manuscripts (Vaticanus Graecus 1162 and Parisinus Graecus 1208) and their illustration* (Unpubl. PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2004).

65 For discussion of this homily, see above, n. 52.

oration? The earlier homily is a lively and varied piece, filled with devices which rapidly became familiar in Marian festal sermons, including the short rhythmic phrases that are characteristic of the 'asianic' style of oratory, direct questions to the audience, sections of dialogue, and a final passage of *chairetismoi*, or greetings of praise, addressed to the Virgin. The preacher succeeds, in an unpretentious manner, in conveying the typological meaning that is central to this subject: the Annunciation of the archangel Gabriel to Mary parallels, but also overturns, the seduction of Eve by the serpent. The old dispensation is both corrected and fulfilled by God's physical arrival in his own creation. Central to this process is the Virgin's acceptance of his will and contribution of her own human nature for the incarnation of Christ.

If the omission of Germanos' sermon on the Annunciation in most liturgical collections is not accidental, does this reflect scribes' view of this text as unsuitable for reading out in the church or refectory? Any answer to this question must remain speculative. The text is composed almost entirely in dialogue, with a series of speeches, in the voices of Gabriel and the Theotokos in the first half, followed by the same number of speeches divided between Joseph and Mary in the second. The speeches are artfully composed according to an alphabetical acrostic in both halves of the sermon.⁶⁶ Various scholars, beginning with La Piana, have speculated about the manner in which Germanos' sermon was performed, suggesting that it may have been intended as a form of liturgical drama similar to the medieval 'mystery plays' in the West.⁶⁷ Although a formal dramatic performance of the sermon is unlikely, owing to the fact that no other evidence for liturgical plays exists in the middle Byzantine period, it does seem possible that the sermon was preached or read antiphonally, with more than one cleric taking different parts in the dialogue.⁶⁸ Such a mode of performance, if it was commonly associated with this text, may have been deemed unsuitable for a monastic setting.

Before leaving the question of the performance of readings (*anagnosmata*) in Byzantine monasteries, we may note the interesting clues provided by a few monastic *typika*. The *Typikon* of the Stoudios Monastery implies that the monks sit down during the reading since they 'rise up after [it] is completed

66 The function of acrostics, which cannot be assimilated easily when sermons or hymns were delivered orally, remains an interesting question. For discussion of this topic with reference to Romanos the Melode's kontakia: D. Krueger, *Writing and Holiness. The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2004), pp. 169–74; J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les oritines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris, 1977), p. 44.

67 G. La Piana, *La rappresentazioni sacre nella letteratura bizantina dalle origini al secolo IX* (Grottaferrata, 1912; repr. London, Variorum Reprints, 1971), pp. 109–27.

68 For further discussion: M.B. Cunningham, 'Dramatic device or didactic tool? The function of dialogue in Byzantine preaching', in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 101–13 (esp. 113).

and say twelve times the “Kyrie eleison”, before resuming the psalmody.⁶⁹ In case the tired brethren should fall asleep in the course of *orthros*, a ‘waker’ is appointed who goes quietly around to the monks and wakes those who have dozed off.⁷⁰ A century or so later, Athanasios, who founded the Great Lavra Monastery on Mount Athos in 962/3, followed the Stoudite *Typikon* closely, adding however some more rigorous rules of his own. In order to discourage laxity among his monks, for example, Athanasios banned staffs for monks to lean on in church. Nikon of the Black Mountain, who prescribes readings both before and during *orthros*, nevertheless argues against all-night vigils on the grounds that these are not ‘in accord with ancient monastic treatises and rules’.⁷¹ On the basis of all of this evidence, we may assume that homiletic readings often took place in the context of sleepy inattention, which abbots were concerned to overcome. Nevertheless, extrapolating from one example of liturgical reading with which most modern Orthodox Christians will be familiar, namely, the lection of (pseudo-) John Chrysostom’s short homily at the end of the midnight office of *orthros* at Easter, we may infer that their delivery may occasionally have been thrilling and completely appropriate to the liturgical context.⁷²

On the basis of the evidence presented so far, it is clear that the most revealing evidence concerning the use of patristic sermons as readings in the later Byzantine Church relates to monasteries. It is the monastic *typika* that provide the most conclusive and detailed information about how and when these texts were employed, both inside and outside of liturgical offices. The question remains, however, whether it is also possible to deduce anything about the reading of sermons in cathedrals or parish churches on the basis of liturgical collections and *typika*. The answer is unclear since, as we saw earlier, cathedral *typika* such as that of the Great Church are not so informative on this issue as the monastic ones and furthermore, there appears to be very little other evidence concerning the use of patristic readings in Byzantine churches. We may surmise on the basis of the large numbers of liturgical manuscripts that survive, however, that at least some of these were used in cathedrals and parish churches, as well as in monasteries. It is also possible, as Robert Taft has recently shown, to draw some broad conclusions about the extent to which a

69 Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 1, p. 104.

70 Ibid., p. 107.

71 A. Kazhdan, ‘Nikon of the Black Mountain’, *ODB* vol. 3, pp. 1484–5 (he lived between c.1025 and c.1100/1110); Thomas and Hero, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 1, p. 390.

72 CPG 4605; PG 59:721–724; *Pentekostarion* (Athens, 1836), p. 6. Known as the ‘hieratikon’ or ‘catechetical’ paschal sermon of John Chrysostom, but classed by Geerard among his spurious works, this text is often read at the end of the midnight office (*orthros*) in Orthodox churches today. Although this is the practice in the Russian churches that I have attended in recent years, I am informed that in some churches in Greece, the homily is read out after the Paschal liturgy.

Byzantine congregation might have understood an exegetical or festal sermon when it was read out in church.⁷³ It is certainly likely that the majority of lay Christians were unable to comprehend completely a high-style oration, composed several – or even many – centuries earlier, which employed the language and tropes of classical rhetoric. On the other hand, as I have pointed out before, many features of Byzantine sermons in fact aid the comprehension even of an unsophisticated audience: these include the repetition of scriptural passages (which were probably well known to most listeners), the use of devices such as anaphora, repetition, rhetorical questioning, and so on.⁷⁴ Above all, it should be recognized that many festal homilies resemble hymnography in their use of formulaic typology and imagery; many texts take the form of liturgical poetry more than of prose. Finally, however, we must recognize that it is impossible to generalize in such a short study as this about levels of education in different periods of middle and late Byzantine history. The whole subject warrants a full-scale study on the basis of the evidence presented here, along with other literary sources in a variety of genres.

Although this article has treated the subject of sermons as liturgical readings only briefly, I thus hope that it will be suggestive of avenues for future research. The most significant question, however, in the context of this article and its dedication to Leslie Brubaker, is whether homilies acquired *new meanings* for audiences of different eras. If we recall again the content of most festal, but also exegetical, sermons, the answer appears to be negative. Byzantine sermons for the most part avoid historical or topical references; their subject-matter is the eternal and unchanging story of God's dispensation for human salvation. According to Byzantine preachers of all periods, this unified message may be discerned in both the Old and New Testaments. The Christian feast-days each reveal the entire story, simply approaching it from different angles. Historical or topical allusions do not feature often in Byzantine sermons: thus these texts remained suitable as liturgical readings throughout the centuries. Furthermore, the resemblances between many middle Byzantine festal sermons and hymnography, in terms of theology, imagery, and rhetorical method, are telling. The former, even at the time of their composition, may have been intended primarily as liturgical texts rather than as tools of pastoral instruction. Byzantine sermons, whether at their first, frequently extempore, performance or at subsequent readings in liturgical settings, thus offer a vision, message and meaning which intends – even if this aim is sometimes disrupted by an unusual event that demands comment – to transport listeners into God's eternal and unchanging kingdom. They, like other liturgical texts, help to perpetuate the Byzantine perception of a

73 See R.F. Taft, S.J., *Through Their Own Eyes. Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley, California, 2006), esp. pp. 79–87.

74 Cunningham, 'Preaching and the community', p. 46.

seamless and unified tradition, which expresses the harmonious *taxis* of the orthodox Christian Church. The process of selection, which led some texts to be included in liturgical collections and others to be rejected, inevitably contributed to the uniformity of this tradition.

'The teaching of the ladder': The Message of the *Heavenly Ladder* Image in Sinai ms. gr. 417

Kathleen Corrigan and Nancy P. Ševčenko

In 1959, not long after his first visit to the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, Kurt Weitzmann chose a manuscript in the monastery's library to be the subject of an article he wrote to honor his former professor in Berlin, the historian of Islamic art, Ernst Kühnel. Though the manuscript (Sinai gr. 417; here Figs 7.1–7.3) contained one of the most popular of all Byzantine writings, the *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimakos, its illustration betrayed, he thought, a different culture from that of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. In his article, he explored the Islamic and Coptic influences evident in the ornament and the presence of a peculiar decorative script, and concluded that the manuscript was a product of the mid-tenth century produced in all probability in the Sinai monastery itself. In the volume he later authored with George Galavaris on the illustrated manuscripts of Mount Sinai, his suggestions as to date and origin were repeated.¹

1 K. Weitzmann, 'Islamische und koptische Einflüsse in einer Sinai-Handschrift des Johannes Klimakus', in R. Ettinghausen (ed.), *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst: Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel zum Geburtstag am 26.10.1957* (Berlin, 1959), pp. 297–316; K. Weitzmann and G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts. Volume. 1: From the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 28–31 (no. 9), pl. Ib, figs 32–44 (with earlier bibliography). On the manuscript see also: J.R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton, 1954), pp. 10, 19–20, 186–7; figs. 1–4; A. Grabar, *Les manuscrits grecs enluminés de provenance italienne (IXe–XIe siècles)* (Paris, 1972), pp. 75–6, (no. 49); K. Weitzmann, *Illustrated Manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai* (Collegeville, MN 1973), p. 11, figs 6–7; I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturhandschriften, volumes 1–3: Oxford, Bodleian Library* (Stuttgart, 1977–82), vol. 3, pp. 8, 9; G. Galavaris, "'Sinaitic' Manuscripts in the time of the Arabs', *DChAE* 4, 12 (1984): pp. 117–44 (esp. pp. 121–2), figs 2–4; G. Galavaris, 'Η ζωγραφική τῶν χειρογράφων στὸν δεκάτον αἰῶνα', in A. Markopoulos (ed.), *Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and his Age* (Athens, 1989), pp. 333–75 (esp. p. 357), figs 21–2; M.L. Agati, 'La "minuscola bouletée" in area provinciale', in G. Cavallo, G. DeGregorio and M. Maniaci (eds), *Scrittura, libri e testi nelle provinciale*

The Manuscript

The manuscript is of interest not only for its script and ornament, and for the fact that it may be the earliest illustrated Klimakos to have survived, but also because its image of the Heavenly Ladder itself (Fig. 7.2) is unlike any other in the long history of Klimakos illustration. Unraveling the meaning of this page is the primary aim of our joint article.²

The main text of the Sinai codex is written in a fine *minuscule bouletée*, the elegant Byzantine script characteristic of the tenth century.³ The codex also contains many painted headpieces and initials, and three large miniatures located before the *Heavenly Ladder* text begins.⁴ These were all apparently executed by the scribe himself. The first of these miniatures is a portrait of John Klimakos, painted under the final words of the Prologue (fol. 13r; Fig. 7.1). A large wreath encloses a bust of the gray-bearded saint, whose hands are open before his chest in prayer. He is inscribed 'Ο 'ΟCΙΟC 'ΙΩΑΝΝΗC in green uncials on the unpainted parchment; his halo too is green. The concentric bands that frame this bust are filled by a variety of designs (guilloche, disks, gemmed segments) painted mostly in strong green, red and blue. The broadest of the bands contains a rinceau made up of cornucopias sprouting large green wavy leaves, outlined against the plain parchment. The mouths of the cornucopias are ringed with pearls. Adjacent to the wreath are four smaller roundels, rimmed again with pearls, each roundel enclosing an eight-pointed star that has a ring of pearls in its center. Between the roundels are three much smaller green disks, devoid of ornament, while a horizontal band of diverse rosettes alternating with stacked pairs of green disks runs above the wreath, dividing it from the text above.

di Bisanzio (Spoleto, 1991), pp. 203–17 (esp. pp. 205–7), pls 1, 12; M.L. Agati, *La minuscola 'bouletée'*, 2 vols (Vatican City, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 137–8; vol. 2, pl. 89; G. Galavaris, *Ζωγραφική βυζαντινῶν χειρογράφων* (Athens, 1995), p. 70, fig. 46, 223; K. Weitzmann, *Die Byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts. Addenda und Appendix* (Vienna, 1996), pp. 7, 9, 55, 93, figs 691–4; P. Gehin, 'La bibliothèque de Sainte-Catherine du Sinai. Fonds anciens et nouvelles découvertes', in D. Valabell and Ch. Bonnet (eds), *Le Sinai durant l'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge. 4000 ans d'histoire pour un désert* (Paris, 1998), pp. 157–64 (esp. p. 160).

2 We warmly thank Father Justin Sinaites, librarian of Saint Catherine's monastery, for providing us with the photos that accompany this article.

3 On this script: Agati, *La minuscola 'bouletée'*.

4 Some opening pages of the manuscript (fols 2–10) are no longer in their proper place. Weitzmann's reconstruction, however, is incorrect ('Einflüsse', p. 300; *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, p. 28): the folios are much closer to their original order than he realized. The codex began with the Letter of John of Raithou (fols 1r–1v, 11r), after which came the Preface (fol. 11v), the Pinax or Table of Contents (fols 11v–12v), and the Prologue (fols 12v–13r). Only fols 2–10, which contain the end of the Vita of John Klimakos by the monk Daniel and the opening of Logos 1, have been displaced: now inserted between fols 1 and 11, they originally would have followed fol. 16v. The text of Logos 1 resumes on fol. 17r, and from then on all is in order. The codex concludes with the Homily to the Pastor (fols 235r–54v).



Fig. 7.1 Portrait of John Klimakos, mid-tenth century, *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimakos, Sinai gr. 417, fol. 13r, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai (used with the permission of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai).

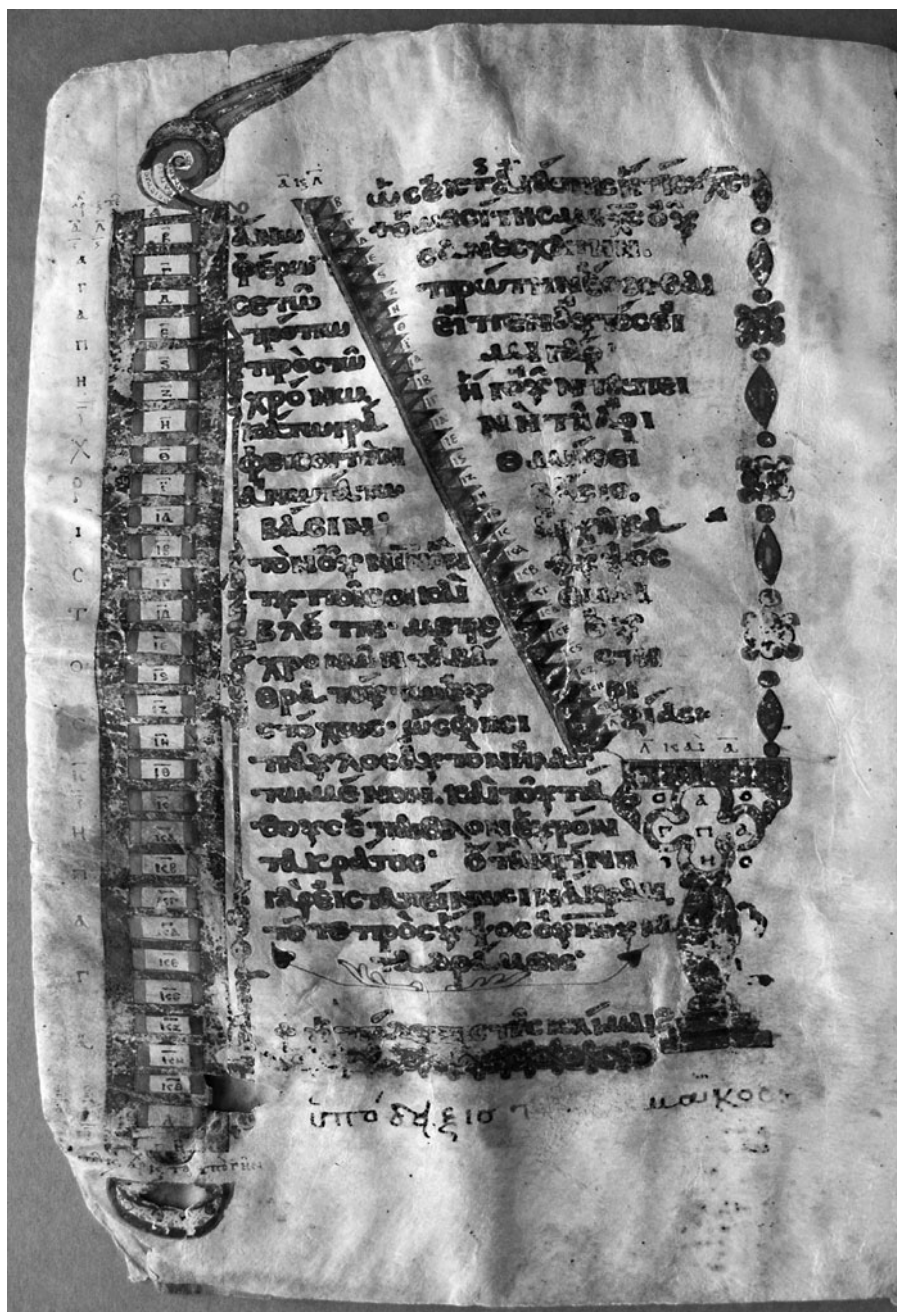


Fig. 7.2 Heavenly Ladder, mid-tenth century, *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimakos, Sinai gr. 417, fol. 13v, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai (used with the permission of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai).

The verso of this folio is the most striking page in the manuscript (fol. 13v; Fig. 7.2). It is dominated by a tall ladder rising up the left edge of the page. The sides and rungs of the ladder are green, with a red inner border. Each rung of the ladder bears the number, written in red ink, of one of the 30 chapters of the Klimakos text. The numbers start at the top rung with Α, alpha, referring to Logos 1, and go down to the lowest rung, Λ, lambda, referring to Logos 30, lambda being the mark for 30 in Greek and Byzantine numbering. The order is that of a regular Table of Contents. Here, however, the top, although inscribed alpha, is not treated as the beginning of the journey, but as its end: the names of the three ultimate virtues, Faith, Hope and Love (the subject of Chapter 30) are inscribed within a tripartite whirl at the top of the ladder that spirals around the name of God, 'Ο Θ(εό)C, and then flares out in a plume that stretches to the upper margin of the page. Written to the left of the top rung of the ladder are the words ἀρχ(ή) κ(αὶ) τέ(λος), 'beginning and end' and the two letters α and λ, that is, '1' and '30'. These two letters appear again, apparently in reverse order, at the lower left of the ladder. The space under the lowest rung of the ladder is labeled ΓΗ, 'Earth'; under this is a small green arc over the words τέ(λος) κ(αὶ) ἀρχ(ή) καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γῆν, 'end and beginning, and what (is) under the earth'. Below this arc is a second larger arc, blue-bordered, enclosing red stars and discs on an unpainted ground, and having a green core, whose pigment has eaten away at the parchment.

To the left of the ladder, written alongside it with each letter starting a new line, are the words Ἀγαπη Χριστος, 'Love (is) Christ'. The word Χριστος is followed first by the abbreviation IC, then by the word Ἀγαπη again, which this time is written in reverse, from the bottom up, so: ηπαγα. In this way the two Agape words meet at the words Jesus (Ι(ησοῦ)C) Christ.

Running alongside the right edge of this ladder, starting this time at its base, is a one-line verse; its words are connected by long parallel lines, so as to extend the poem from the base almost to the top of the ladder. (For the text of all the poems on this folio, see below, pp. 106–7.) Further to the right of the ladder are eight lines of twelve-syllable verse; under the poem is a little leafy flourish penned in red, with trefoil tips. To the right of this poem is a second, shorter ladder: instead of rungs, this ladder has sharply pointed blue triangles fixed to a green ground, which give the appearance of a stairway more than a ladder. The steps are numbered in red from alpha at the top to lambda at the bottom, and at the top are again the letters α καὶ λ, with λ καὶ α appearing at the bottom.⁵ The steps rise over a green gemmed pedestal to which they are connected only by a thin red line of ink. The pedestal is adorned with a quatrefoil within which is inscribed the word αγαπη, written as a monogram. Rising directly from the far edge of the pedestal and framing the page on the

5 The alpha at the top also serves as the number of the top rung since there is no alpha written on the step itself.

right is a vertical design made up of ovals with red centers and balls at their tips, alternating with rosettes. The colors are blue, red and green.

Between the diagonal steps and this design is still a third poem, four lines of 12-syllable verse whose title reads: 'Ὡς ἐκ τ(ῆ)ς ἀγάπης ἡτίς Χ(ριστός)ς (As if (spoken by) Agape, that is, Christ).⁶

Across the bottom of the page between the ladder and the pedestal, are the words ὑπόδειξις τῆς κλίμακος, 'teaching of the ladder', below which is a short strip of strapwork in red and green.⁷

The strong and bright greens, reds and blues of the painted designs on this page are echoed in the lettering of the poems: rolling hollow-bar epigraphic majuscules, outlined in red and filled in with green. The accents are large and wedge-shaped, the breathings square. Particularly decorative is the letter Υ, whose stem drops below the line and expands to form a fleshy *fleur-de-lis*.

On the third miniature page (fol. 14r: Fig. 7.3) yet another ladder makes its appearance.⁸ Here, a broad arch surmounting two smaller horseshoe arches rests on an epistyle on a pair of columns. The lower half of the space between the two columns has been filled with colored lines running from one column over to the next; there are exactly 30 of these lines (or, more precisely, 15 lines plus 15 spaces between the lines), which evidently again represent the 30 steps of the Heavenly Ladder, although no numbers or text of any kind are included here. Above the lines, in the area left blank, is a sketch of Christ holding out a crown, thought to have been added at a later date.⁹ From the top of each capital rises a tall fleshy green acanthus leaf, facing inwards and embracing the central arch. The columns are richly decorated, each with four panels of different types of ornament: two gemmed sections, a guilloche and some plaitwork.

The Poems

The three poems that appear so prominently on fol. 13v, and that are so clearly part of the message of that page, have in fact received no attention at all from modern scholars.¹⁰ It should be noted that though the texts, despite the decorative script, are fully legible, and that the rules of 12-syllable verse are

6 There is a design like a *fleur-de-lis* between the ἡτίς and the Χ(ριστός)ς.

7 A later hand has repeated this phrase under the strip of ornament.

8 Weitzmann, 'Einflüsse', p. 300, believed that this arch page once served as a title page to the whole codex, and that the text of the title was to be written in between the columns. This cannot be the case, as its verso contains the beginning of the Vita of John by the monk Daniel (see above, n. 4), which leads immediately into Logos 1.

9 Weitzmann and Galavaris, *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, p. 29.

10 Only Poem 1 is included in the corpus of Ioannis Vassis, who found it in a thirteenth-century Klimakos manuscript, Milan, Ambrosiana D 58 sup, dated 1259 (see below, p. 117), but was unaware of its presence in Sinai 417: I. Vassis, *Corpus carminum byzantinorum* (Berlin and New York, 2005), p. 63. The Milan manuscript contains also Poem 2. There is a fourth,



Fig. 7.3 Ladder beneath an arch, mid-tenth century, *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimakos, Sinai gr. 417, fol. 14r, Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai (used with the permission of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai).

observed almost without exception, the exact meaning of the poems remains elusive. Our translations therefore remain tentative.¹¹

POEM 1

Ἄνω φέρω(ν) σε τῷ τρόπῳ πρὸς τῷ χρόνῳ.
κάτω γράφει σοι τὴν ἀνωτάτῳ βάσιν.
τὸν οὖν Ἰ(ησοῦ)ν ὃν τυποῖ σοι καὶ βλέπε.
μετροχρονῶν τὰ βάθρα τοῦτῳ εὐστόχως
ὥς φησι Παῦλος αὐτὸν ἡλαττωμένον.
καὶ τοῦ πάθους ἔπαθλον εὐρόντα κράτος. (cf. Hebrews 2.7–9)
ὅτ' ἂν γίνῃ γὰρ εἰς ταπεινῶσιν ἄκραν.
τότε πρὸς ὕψος οὐ(ρα)νοῦ καταδράμεις.

Bringing you on high by a mode¹² within time,
It describes for you below the uppermost step:
While measuring out in time the rungs, aiming well,
Behold Jesus whom it represents (as a model?) for you,
Who, as Paul says, being Himself lesser
Found power as the prize of His Passion.
For, whenever you attain the height of humility,
Then you rush headlong¹³ to the summit of heaven.

POEM 2

ὡς ἐκ τ(ῆ)ς ἀγάπης ἥτις Χ(ριστός) (cf. I. John 4:16)

†Ὁ μεσίτης με Χ(ριστὸ)ς οὐσαν ἐσχάτην.
πρώτην ἔσεσθαι εἶπεν αὐτός εἰμι γάρ. (cf. Revelation 1:17; 22:12; Matthew 19:30)
ἢ γοῦν ταπεινὴ τῇ ἀριθμῇσει βάσις.
ἀρχὴ καθ' ὑψὸς εἰμι εὐστηριζίας (cf. Genesis 28:12).

As if (spoken by) Agape which is Christ

† Christ the mediator said of me, being the last,
That I will be the first, 'for I am myself.
Now <though> a lowly step with respect to the counting
I am the beginning of the stability on high.'

better known, poem in Sinai 417 at the very end of the manuscript, on fol. 254v, unrelated to the theme of the ladder (Ἐν σοὶ τὸ πλήρες Χριστέ μου): *ibid.*, p. 233.

11 We are especially grateful to Ihor Ševčenko, John Duffy and Wolfram Hörandner who have gallantly tried their hands at a reading for us. Jeffrey Michael Featherstone kindly provided us with a preliminary translation of the two poems, though we have altered some of his wording to take into account the emendations of Ihor Ševčenko and our own interpretations of the page and of its relation to the text of the *Heavenly Ladder* itself.

12 See below, note 21.

13 καταδράμεις from the verb κατατρέχω. The verb might also suggest the idea of rushing down in order to create a contrast with going to the summit: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich (eds.), 2nd ed. revised and augmented by F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Danker (Chicago, 1958), p. 419, citing, among other texts, Acts 21:32 'He at once ran down to them (κατέδραμεν ἐπ' αὐτούς)'.

POEM 3

Ἐ(ν) γῆ κατορθῶν εἰς οὐρανὸν μένει

Operating on earth he (or it) remains in heaven.

The Ladder Page and its Sources

A comparison of the ladder imagery on fol. 13v of Sinai 417 to that of other early Klimakos manuscripts shows up its singular character. The earliest ladders painted around the time of Sinai 417 were little more than diagrams accompanying Tables of Contents, and the ladders themselves were strictly vertical.¹⁴ John Rupert Martin, in his study of the illustrated Klimakos manuscripts, draws attention to the inevitable clash between two views of the ladder: the ladder as a progression of chapter headings, running down the page as does a table of contents, and the ladder as image of spiritual progression, which implies movement from the bottom up.¹⁵ As he shows, the scribes of some Klimakos manuscripts with ladder images dealt with this problem by putting a straightforward Table of Contents, text only, at the beginning of the manuscript, and then introducing another list of chapters toward the end of the manuscript. This second one was written in reverse order, with Logos 1 at the bottom and Logos 30 at the top, and was accompanied by a ladder numbered in the same direction, from the bottom up.¹⁶ In some manuscripts, even the primary list of chapters is adjusted so as to read from the bottom up (with alpha at the bottom), to correspond to the notion of the monk's ascent.¹⁷

The ladder page in Sinai 417 is something quite different from either solution. It is removed from the manuscript's Table of Contents, from which it is separated by both the text of the Prologue and the portrait of John. Although freed therefore from functioning as a table of contents, the ladder is nevertheless numbered from the top down (Logos 1 at the top, Logos 30 at the bottom); so too is the flight of steps nearby. Is this composition, as Martin suggests,¹⁸ a transitional solution in the long story of Klimakos illustration? Or does the page have a particular meaning of its own?

Far more than a mere diagram, this ladder page is, and is meant to inspire, a meditation on the deeper meaning of the *Heavenly Ladder*: as the inscription at the bottom of the page states, it constitutes a 'teaching of the Ladder' (ὁπόδειξις τῆς κλίμακος). The scribe/artist has presented the ladder not as a unidirectional means of ascent to heaven, but as a two-way means of connection between heaven and earth, made possible by Christ. In this, he follows closely the

14 Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, pp. 10–11, figs 5–13.

15 Ibid., p. 11.

16 Ibid., figs 6–9.

17 Ibid., figs 10–11.

18 Ibid., pp. 10–14.

meditations of John Klimakos himself, for whom the Heavenly Ladder must be understood in terms of the ladder seen by Jacob in his dream:

and (Jacob) dreamed, and behold a ladder fixed (ἑστηριγμένη; cf. Poem 2, line 4, and Klimakos' chapter 30, see below) on the earth, whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended on it (ἀνέβαινον καὶ κατέβαινον). And the Lord stood upon it (ἑπεστήρικτο), and said, I am the God of thy father Abraham, and the God of Isaac (Genesis 28:12–13).

The concept of Jacob's ladder was crucial for John Klimakos and his *Heavenly Ladder*.¹⁹ Near the end of Chapter 30, when John discusses the three chief virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love (Agape) whom he has earlier equated with God ('for God Himself is so called ... He who wishes to speak about divine love undertakes to speak about God'),²⁰ John appears to be struggling to understand Jacob's ladder in the context of his Christian beliefs. For this he enlists the help of Agape, asking her:

Fairest of virtues ... I long to know how Jacob saw Thee fixed above the ladder (ἐπὶ τὴν κλίμακα σε ἑστηριγμένην). Satisfy my desire, tell me, What are the means (τρόπος) of such an ascent? What the manner (ἔρανος), what the sum of the combination of these steps (βαθμῶν) which Thy lover sets as an ascent in his heart (cf. Psalm 83:6). I thirst to know the number (ἀριθμός) of those steps, and the time needed for the ascent (ὅσος δὲ ἄρα τοῦ δρόμου χρόνος). He who

19 It is referred to a number of times in John's text. Representations of Jacob's ladder go back to the early Christian period. E.-M. Kaufmann, *Jakob's Traum un der Augstieg des Menschen zu Gott: das Thema der Himmelsleiter in der bildenden Kunst des Mittelalters* (Tübingen, 2006). Images of Jacob and of Jacob's ladder appear in some of the later illustrated Klimakos manuscripts: Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, pp. 108–9, figs 23 and 227. There is no indication, however, that the artist of fol. 13v in Sinai 417 was looking at an image of Jacob's ladder; he equally could have been thinking of the idea of the ladder as it is described in Genesis and discussed by John Klimakos and other authors.

20 PG 88:1153D–1156A, trans. Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, *St. John Climacus. The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (London, 1959), p. 262. The *Heavenly Ladder* and related texts can be found in PG 88:624–1208; there is no modern critical edition. In addition to Moore's translation we have also consulted that of C. Luibheid and N. Russell, *John Climacus, the Ladder of Divine Ascent* (New York, 1982). For some discussions of the text, see the introductions to these two translations, as well as D. Bogdanović, *Jovan Lestvičnik u vizantijskoj i staroj srpskoj književnosti* (Belgrade, 1968) (with French summary); W. Völker, *Scala Paradisi. Eine Studie zu Johannes Climacus und zugleich eine Vorstudie zu Symeon dem Neuen Theologen* (Wiesbaden, 1968); J. Chrysavgis, *Ascent to Heaven, the Theology of the Human Person according to Saint John of the Ladder* (Brookline, Massachusetts, 1989); J. Duffy, 'Embellishing the Steps: Elements of Presentation and Style in *The Heavenly Ladder* of John Climacus', *DOP* 53 (1999): pp. 1–17; H.R. Johnsén, *Reading John Climacus: Rhetorical Argumentation, Literary Convention and the Tradition of Monastic Formation* (Lund, 2007). Psalm references are to the Septuagint translation: *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*, trans. L.C.L. Breton (London, 1851).

knows the struggle and the vision has told us of the guides (χειραγωγούς). But he would not, or rather, he could not, enlighten us any further.²¹

For John, the concept of a ladder connecting heaven and earth inevitably brings up the problem of how the gulf separating heaven and earth, material and divine, can possibly be bridged. He wants to know the means by which such a connection can be made. It seems he also is troubled by the idea that the immaterial God (Agape) can be 'fixed' at the top of the material ladder. Jacob, he suggests, only went so far in offering an explanation for his vision, reporting only on those intermediate beings, the angel guides, who use the ladder to ascend and descend from heaven. John goes on to relate Agape's answer to his questions:

And this queen (βασίλισσα; referring to the feminine Agape) ... as if appearing to me from heaven and as if speaking in the ear of my soul, said: Unless beloved, you renounce your gross flesh, you cannot know my beauty. May this ladder teach you the spiritual combination of the virtues. On the top of it I have established myself (ἐπ' αὐτῆς διεστήριγμαί ἐγὼ τῆς κορυφῆς), as my great initiate (Saint Paul) said: And now there remain faith, hope, love – these three; but the greatest of all is love (I. Corinthians 13:13).²²

Critical here is Agape's admonition to John that he must renounce his gross flesh in order to achieve the union with the divine that the ladder offers. This he can accomplish through the practice of the virtues. It is also important to be clear who it is that John imagines to be fixed at the top of the ladder. It is Agape, who is God, and also Christ. This is supported by John's final exhortation following the end of Chapter 30, where he identifies Christ as the one at the top of the ladder:

Ascend, brothers, ascend eagerly ... Run, I beseech you, with him who said: Let us hasten until we attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13), who, when He was baptized in the thirtieth year of His visible age, attained the thirtieth step in the spiritual ladder; since God is indeed love, to whom be praise, dominion, power, in whom is and was and will be the cause of all goodness throughout infinite ages. Amen.²³

Thus the resolution to all the questions about the ladder is Christ. Christ's dual nature provides the means of connecting human and divine, material and immaterial. His human nature allows him to be present, fixed, at the top of the earthly ladder. Through both his nature and his earthly achievements (i.e., his

21 PG 88:1160B–D; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, pp. 265–6. Luibheid and Russell, *John Climacus* p. 289, translate τρόπος as 'mode'.

22 PG 88:1159D; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, p. 266.

23 PG 88:1160D–1161A; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, p. 266.

virtues), he provides the model for human spiritual progress. Through Christ, the ladder can truly be a connector between heaven and earth.

From what we see and read on fol. 13v, it is apparent that our scribe/artist was very familiar with the passages from the *Heavenly Ladder* quoted above. In Poem 1, for example, some of the words used, such as 'mode', 'steps', 'number', and 'time', are the same as those used by John. Furthermore, both the artist's way of visualizing the union of the virtues and his placement of God at the top of the ladder seem to depend on the passage at the very beginning of Chapter 30 mentioned above:

And now, finally, after all that we have said, there remain these three that bind and secure the union of all, faith, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love, for God Himself is so called. And (as far as I can make out) I see the one as a ray, the second as a light, the third as a circle; and in all, one radiance and one splendour.²⁴

The decorative swirl 'binding and securing' the top of the ladder on fol. 13v closely resembles this description. One can clearly see the ray, the disk, and the tripartite whirl with the words Faith, Hope and Love enclosing 'the very name of God Himself' (Θ Θ(εό)C).

Poem 2 tells us outright that the connection is accomplished through the mediator, Christ. He is the last who will be first, he is the lowest rung, he is both the beginning (ἀρχή) and the height of stability – the one fixed at the top of the ladder. Even though the ladder is anchored to the earth and the flight of steps is connected to the pedestal, next to the ends of both the scribe has written λ καὶ α and α καὶ λ, '30 and 1', and '1 and 30,' to indicate that in both ladders, the first is also the last, and *vice-versa*. The vertical ladder on the left is accompanied by the words ἀρχ(ή) κ(αὶ) τέ(λος) at the top and τέ(λος) κ(αὶ) ἀρχ(ή) at the bottom, and by the doubled word 'Agape' converging from above and below on the words Jesus and Christ. In short, the scribe uses a variety of means to show that this ladder goes in both directions. Even more pointed is the short Poem 3, written to the right of the ladder: 'Operating on earth, he remains in heaven.' This can apply to Christ as well as to the ladder which is embedded in the earth (ΓΗ) while touching God in heaven. And as if to parallel John's dialogue with Agape in Chapter 30, our scribe claims that his own explanation has been given to him by Christ; this is suggested by the title he gives to Poem 2: 'As if (spoken by) Agape, which is Christ.'

Our scribe/artist then follows John in presenting Christ as the solution to the questions about the concept of the heavenly ladder, how it can connect heaven and earth, human and divine; and how God could be fixed there, present, yet still occupying his position in heaven. In the process he has created a unique composition designed not only to teach but to inspire mystical meditation on the ultimate significance of the Heavenly Ladder.

24 PG 88:1153D–1156A; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, p. 262.

The Monastic Context of the Ladder Page

Thus far we have discussed our scribe/artist's engagement with the theological aspects of the ladder. But he did not neglect the monastic context. This is, after all, a monastic text, and we are probably safe in assuming that our scribe/artist and his readers were monks. There are a number of ways in which the poems and imagery more specifically address monastic concerns.

One is the focus on Agape. John Klimakos himself sees Love as the crucial element in the monk's ascent. Scholars who have studied John's text have pointed out that, although his use of the ladder was influenced by that of Evagrius (346–99), he differs from Evagrius in identifying the monk's ultimate goal as Love as opposed to Knowledge (gnosis).²⁵ Agape plays a primary role on our page: surrounding the name of God at the top of the ladder, connecting heaven and earth, bottom and top through the inscription 'Agape-Jesus Christ-Agape,' and filling the quatrefoil of the object we have been referring to as a pedestal. Perhaps the urn-shaped pedestal should be read as a cup, a reference to the Eucharist or to the wine that was shared at the monastic 'love feast' or Agape. Such so-called 'love feasts' are mentioned in *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*; for example:

(Abba Isaiah) also said that when there was an Agape and the brethren were eating in the church and talking to one another, the priest of Pelusia reprimanded them in these words, 'Brethren, be quiet. For I have seen a brother eating with you and drinking as many cups as you and his prayer is ascending to the presence of God like fire'.²⁶

Unfortunately we have no way of knowing if or how the Agape might have been celebrated at the monastery where our manuscript was made and/or used.²⁷ But if it was, we might conclude that the cup refers to the support offered to the monk by the blessings of monastic life.

25 Luibheid and Russell, *John Climacus*, p. 12.

26 *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers, The Alphabetical Collection*, trans. B. Ward SLG and Metropolitan Anthony (Kalamazoo, Michigan, rev. ed. 1984), p. 69. Other references to the Agape can be found on pages 110, 148, 213 and 217.

27 For the monks of a *laura*, the Agape can refer to the meal they celebrate weekly in common: J. Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: a Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Washington, 1995), p. 209. When mentioned later, in the Byzantine monastic *typika* for example, Agape generally refers to memorial meals associated with funerals: J. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero (eds), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents* (Washington, 2000), general index, 'agape'. But note that in a *typikon* for the Sinai monastery of 1214, '... on Thursday of this week (the week of Thomas, the second week after Easter), we are to celebrate our saintly father John of the Ladder and on his behalf hold an Agape for the brothers': A.A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisej*, 3 vols (Kiev and St. Petersburg, 1895–1917, repr. Hildesheim 1965), vol. 3, p. 406; trans. N.P. Ševčenko, 'The Liturgical *typikon* of Symeon of Sinai', in M. Mullett (ed.), *Metaphrastes or Gained in Translation. Essays and translations in honour of Robert H. Jordan* (Belfast, 2004), p. 277.

A second way in which the poems and imagery specifically address monastic concerns has to do with Detachment and Exile. Separation from family, friends, and all aspects of the monk's past life are important themes in monastic writings; they are addressed repeatedly in the *Heavenly Ladder*, especially in Step 2 on Detachment and Step 3 on Exile. The repeated references to first and last would certainly have brought to mind the passages in Matthew 19:27–30 and Mark 10:28–31 in which Christ is answering Peter's question as to what those who have left everything and followed Christ will receive: 'And everyone who left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many first ones shall be last, and the last ones first.'

The third and most fully developed theme related to monastic ideas is Humility. Humility and suffering as the path to God is the primary theme of Poem 1. Christ is held up as the model (τύπος) the monk should imitate in his struggle towards unity with God. Lines 5–6 of the poem point to Christ's willingness to abase himself through his Passion. The poem refers the reader to Paul in Hebrews 2:7–9:

You made him a little less (ἡλάττωσας, cf. Poem 1, line 5) than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and You set him over the works of Your hands ... but we do see Jesus crowned with glory and honor, who on account of the suffering of death was made a little less than the angels (cf. Psalm 8:5), so that by the grace of God He might taste of death for every son.

Using angels as a pivot point at the juncture of human and divine is common in monastic literature, including the *Heavenly Ladder*. The monk's goal is to join the company of angels. In the first chapter of the *Ladder*, John writes: 'The monk is he who within his earthly and soiled body toils towards the rank and state of the incorporeal beings (i.e. angels).'²⁸ Not surprisingly, in some Klimakos manuscripts a triumphant monk is shown approaching a group of angels at the top of the ladder.²⁹ In the Sinai 417 composition, however, there is no triumphant monk at the top of the ladder. As noted above, the ladders here do not have such a unidirectional sense, but instead seem to double back on themselves. It is possible that this approach also reflects some of John's thinking about the monk's progress up the ladder, namely, that it is never-

28 PG 88:633B; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, p. 50.

29 In an eleventh-century Klimakos manuscript, Vatican gr. 394, fol. 155r (Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, p. 81, fig. 132) there is an inscription accompanying the image of the monk's final triumph that begins: 'Whoever conquers the body conquers nature and whoever conquers nature has become above nature. And having become this, he was made a little lower than the angels.' The image shows the monk at the top of the ladder, just below the host of angels, touching the feet of Christ, and accompanied by an inscription that says he has been made one with God. On this manuscript, see also: K. Corrigan, 'Constantine's Problems: The Making of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus, Vat. gr. 394,' *Word & Image* 12 (1996): pp. 61–93.

ending. Borrowing from Gregory of Nyssa's idea of perpetual progress, John writes in Logos 26:

... and if love never ceases, and if the Lord will guard the coming in of your fear and the going out of your love, then from this it follows that there is actually no limit to love. We shall never cease to advance in it, either in the present or in the future life, continually adding light to light. And however strange what I have said may seem to many, nevertheless it shall be said. According to the testimonies we have given, I would say, blessed Father, even the spiritual beings (i.e. the angels) do not lack progress; on the contrary, they ever add glory to glory, and knowledge to knowledge.³⁰

The last two lines of Poem 1 continue the theme of humility and its reward, and evoke the antithesis of high and low. By attaining the height of humility, the monk reaches the summit of heaven.³¹ The phrase ταπείνωσιν ἄκραν (height of humility) itself embodies this antithesis, and creates a paradox. This usage can be found in the text of the *Heavenly Ladder*: though, as far as we can determine, John Klimakos never uses the precise formulation ταπείνωσιν ἄκραν, his Logos 26 often bears the title 'Concerning the highest humility (ὑψίστου ταπεινοφροσύνης)'.³²

It is evident that the poems and the inscriptions on fol. 13v work intensively with the paradoxes inherent in the pairings of bottom and top, heaven and earth, high and low, beginning and end. Antithesis and paradox are common in John Klimakos' text,³³ and their use in any musing about the functioning of the Heavenly Ladder is to be expected. However, one could also argue that these paradoxes would have been made more urgent for the scribe/artist as he wrestled with the concept of the ladder and engaged in the process of its visual representation. Drawing the ladders, deciding how to number them, considering what to place at the bottom and the top and how to connect bottom and top – all these were important considerations for him, and would have played a crucial role in the formulation of his meditation on the Ladder.

30 PG 88:1068B; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, p. 225. The connection between John Klimakos and Gregory of Nyssa on this point is made by Kallistos Ware in his introduction to the Luijheid and Russell, *John Climacus*, translation (p. 57).

31 On the possible translation of καταδράμεις as rush down, see note 13 above.

32 The phrase *Akra Tapeinosis* has in modern times come to refer to the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows (*Imago Pietatis*). Neither the source of the phrase, nor its connection with the Man of Sorrows has been properly investigated. The phrase does not appear in Isaiah 53:8 as is often claimed, only the word ταπεινώσει. Nor, as far as we can tell, was it ever attached to an actual image. The subject needs further study. In the meantime, see H. and H. Buschhausen, 'Zur Akra Tapeinosis in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit', in S. Mucznik (ed.), *Kalathos: Studies in Honour of Asher Ovadia* (Tel Aviv, 2006), pp. 285–92; H. Egger, 'Das Bild des toten Christus: Epitaphios, Akra Tapeinosis, Imago Pietatis', in N. Stefanelli (ed.), *Körper ohne Leben* (Böhlau, 1998), pp. 429–46.

33 Johnsén, *Reading John Climacus*, p. 21.

Origin and Context of the Manuscript

We have no way of knowing whether the scribe/artist of Sinai 417 created the diagrams and poems on folio 13v himself, or whether he copied them from an older manuscript of the *Heavenly Ladder*, closer in date to the time of its author John Klimakos. We know so little about Sinai in either period, and virtually nothing about manuscript production there at this time. But between the death of Klimakos in the mid-seventh century and the early tenth century when our manuscript was produced, three major authors have been associated with the monastery: Anastasios of Sinai (c.700), Hesychios of Batos and Philotheos of Sinai, the latter two constituting what has become known as the Sinaitic school.³⁴ It is possible that the message of our page can be associated eventually with the writings of one of these authors, but the connections are not immediately obvious. At any rate, Anastasios of Sinai did insist on the importance of illustrations to his text for conveying its meaning, and Hesychios developed the process of prayer and meditation on the name of Jesus.³⁵

Weitzmann's argument for attributing the manuscript to Sinai itself was based not on specific Greek manuscript parallels but on the very diversity of the stylistic elements he observed in it. To the influence of Coptic manuscripts, he attributed the columns with their panels of ornament, the star designs and some of the diverse scripts; to Islamic influence, the rinceau, cornucopia, and pearl designs of the portrait medallion (which he compares to mosaics in the Great Mosque of Damascus and the Dome of the Rock), and the decorative display script of the poems and the long parallel lines connecting the words of poem 3, which he derived from the Arabic Kufic script.³⁶ Closer, even, than the Kufic parallels adduced by Weitzmann is a tenth-century Iranian alabaster tombstone, once thought to be Egyptian, in the foliated Kufic script that originated in Egypt (Fig. 7.4): on the tombstone the letters are marked by floral extensions very like the upsilons in Sinai 417, and there is writing up the sides of the central field, at right angles to it, as in our poem 3.³⁷ All the

34 I. Hausherr, *La méthode d'oraison hésychaste* (Rome, 1927), pp. 119–22, 134–48; *eadem*, *The Name of Jesus* (trans. of his *Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison*) (Kalamazoo, 1978), pp. 279f.); Volker, *Scala Paradisi*, pp. 291–314. The dates for Hesychios of Batos and Philotheos of Sinai are unknown, except that they wrote sometime between 700 and tenth century.

35 A.D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton, 1986), esp. pp. 40–67; Volker, *Scala Paradisi*, esp. pp. 300–303. The focus on prayer and the name of Jesus was to inspire the later Hesychast movement.

36 Weitzmann, 'Einflüsse', pp. 308, 310, 312, 305–6, 312–13; Weitzmann and Galavaris, *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, pp. 30–31.

37 The tombstone is in the Los Angeles County Museum (M, 73.5.246). Thought by A. Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World* (Austin, 1979), p. 46 (no. 2), to be Egyptian, it is now attributed to Iran, probably Nishapur, and to the second half of the tenth century: P. Chevedden, 'A Samanid Tombstone from Nishapur', *Ars Orientalis* 15 (1986): 153–70, figs 1–3. We thank Linda Komaroff, Curator of Islamic Art at the Los Angeles County Museum, for kindly steering us to this article. Different tombstones with somewhat



Fig. 7.4 Islamic tombstone, probably Nishapur, second half of the tenth century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California (Digital Image © 2009 Museum Associates / LACMA / Art Resource, NY).

while, the script of the main Klimakos text, an exemplary *minuscule bouletée*, remains well within the Byzantine orbit; both it and the initials find parallels even among some of the best-known products of the capital.³⁸

similar lettering have been published as Egyptian: Yasin Safadi, *Islamic Calligraphy* (London, 1978), pp. 34–5 (Egypt, tenth century), p. 46, fig. 20 ('from the Gulf', dated 991); A. Schimmel, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Leiden, 1970), pl. IIb (Egypt, eleventh century).

38 Weitzmann, 'Einflüsse', pp. 306–7, 310–12. On the script: Agati, *Minuscola 'bouletée'*, pp. 137–8; Agati, 'Minuscola bouletée', pp. 205–7. Agati accepts Weitzmann's attribution of

Weitzmann's suggestion of Sinai as the most likely place to find such a mixture of influences is a reasonable one.³⁹ It would seem that the population of the monastery in the period between the eighth and the tenth centuries consisted primarily of Syrian and Arab Christians, and Georgians.⁴⁰ The competent 12-syllable Greek poems might suggest a more urban, literary milieu than that of the Sinai monastery, though they could have been drawn from a corpus of monastic epigrams such as those poems collected in the seventh century(?) by John Georgidis. These poems, many of them based on the Klimakos text, have been attributed to a Syrian/Palestinian monastic milieu.⁴¹ The doubling of the ladders in Sinai 417, with the second being more like a set of steps, could even have reflected the specific Sinai setting, where a series of stone-cut steps, attested as early as the sixth-seventh century, led from behind the monastery up to the crest of Mount Sinai itself, and where, intriguingly, the second arch over the steps was inscribed no later than the seventh century with the words 'For the salvation of abba Ioannis, the abbot, and ...'.⁴² On this peak Moses, the great model for Klimakos, had received the tablets of the law, whose equivalent, the 'spiritual tablets', John was to receive and share in his own time.⁴³

the manuscript to Sinai.

39 However Weitzmann, 'Einflüsse', p. 315, admitted that it would be surprising to find a manuscript of this quality being done in the monastery in the tenth century. N. Kavrus-Hoffmann, 'Tenth-Century Greek Gospels at the Walters Art Museum: Writing Styles and Ornamental Motifs', *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 62 (2004): pp. 21–34, esp. p. 26, has suggested that some of the scholia in Sinai 417 were written by the hand responsible for the whole of Sinai 1112, a book of canon (laws), making it likely that both manuscripts were done in place on Sinai. But it cannot be ruled out that both manuscripts could have been produced in another center and have traveled together to Sinai at a later period. André Grabar assigned Sinai 417 to Southern Italy, a hypothesis rejected by Weitzmann; Gehin agrees with a Near Eastern provenance, but doubts the manuscript was done on Sinai (see above, n. 1).

40 N.P. Ševčenko, 'Manuscript Production on Mount Sinai from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century', in S.E.J. Gerstel and R.S. Nelson (eds), *Approaching the Holy Mountain: Art and Liturgy at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai* (J. Paul Getty Museum and the University of California, Los Angeles, forthcoming); Galavaris, '"Sinaitic" Manuscripts'; A. Binggeli, 'La version syriaque des Récits d'Anastase le Sinaïte et l'activité des moines syriaques au Mont Sinaï aux VIIIe–IXe siècles', in Mu'tamar al-Turath al-Suryani (ed.), *Patrimoine syriaque, Actes du Colloque IX: Les Syriaques transmetteurs de civilisations: l'expérience du Bilad El-Sham à l'époque omeyyade* (2 vols, Antilyas, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 167–77.

41 P. Odorico, *Il prato e l'ape. Il sapere sentenzioso del monaco Giovanni* (Vienna, 1986); M. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres* (Vienna, 2003), pp. 263–7.

42 I. Ševčenko, 'The early period of the Sinai monastery in the light of its inscriptions', *DOP* 20 (1966): pp. 255–64 (esp. pp. 257, 263). Which John that may have been is impossible to say. The top of the mountain was generally referred to as the *koryphe*, the chapel there as the Hagia Koryphe. The word was frequently used by Klimakos for the top of the Heavenly Ladder (see above, p. 109). A Klimakos miniature in a manuscript of 1285 in Moscow (Historical Museum gr. 146, fol. 278v) shows the ladder apparently rising from the monastery walls: Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, pp. 12, 170, fig. 13.

43 John's contemporary, abbot John of Raithou, first drew the parallel between John Klimakos and Moses: 'We appeal to your masterly virtue to describe for stupid people

A glance at the later tradition of the ladder page of Sinai 417 does not confirm or deny the possibility of a Sinai origin for our manuscript. There are two later manuscripts that repeat the remarkable Sinai ladder page: one of them, Patmos 121 of the early eleventh century, is a remarkably precise copy (Fig. 7.5); the other, Milan, Ambrosiana D 58 sup, dated 1259, is a looser one.⁴⁴ Nothing is known of the history of either of these manuscripts, and the degree of their relation to Sinai 417. Together, however, they indicate that the conception of the Heavenly Ladder represented by our Sinai page seems to have had a certain limited resonance across the years.

The mainstream Klimakos ladder page, however, was to develop in a quite different direction, into the by now familiar image of a ladder, on which some monks ascend to the welcoming hand of Christ, and from which others plunge into Hades or the jaws of the dragon (e.g. the miniature in Princeton, Garrett 16, fol. 194r: Fig. 7.6).⁴⁵ These images focus on the idea of the ladder as a means of steady ascent to the heavenly state and include the possibility

like us what you have seen in divine vision like Moses of old on that same mountain, and to send us a book like the divinely written tablets, for the instruction of the New Israel ... And, as a ladder set up (cf. Genesis 28:12), they (the tablets) will lead aspirants to the gates of heaven pure and blameless ... For if Jacob, who was a shepherd of sheep, saw by means of a ladder such a dread vision, surely we can expect the director of spiritual sheep to show to all not only in vision, but in truth, the sure ascent to God? PG 88:624B–625A; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, pp. 42–3. According to his biographer Daniel of Raithou, John Klimakos 'like some newly appeared Moses ... approached the mountain, he entered the unapproachable darkness and, mounting by spiritual steps, he received the divinely written law and contemplation ... And he attained the limits of the visible life, guiding these Israelites – the monks.' PG 88:605A; trans. Moore, *St. John Climacus*, pp. 38–9.

44 See N.P. Ševčenko, 'Monastic Challenges: Some Illustrated Manuscripts of the Heavenly Ladder', in C. Hourihane (ed.), *Byzantine Art: Recent Studies* (Princeton, 2009), pp. 39–62. Patmos 121 fol. 3v changes virtually nothing from the Sinai ladder page except its exotic script and a couple of words in the first poem that have been evidently misunderstood by the later scribe. In the Patmos codex the ladder page is preceded, as in Sinai 417, by a page (fol. 3r) with a wreath similar to that found on fol. 13r of Sinai 417, but the wreath lacks the portrait of Klimakos. The ladder page is followed, again as in Sinai 417 (fol. 14r), with a page of painted strips forming a ladder under arches (fol. 4r). The foliation remains consistent as well. On Patmos 121, which is unpublished: I. Sakellion, *Patmiske Bibliothēke* (Athens, 1890), pp. 70–71. The Milan Klimakos again has two ladders, but they and the poems are distributed over two pages, a recto and a verso (fols 2r–2v): E. Martini and D. Bassi, *Catalogus Codicum Graecorum Bibliothecae Ambrosianae* (2 vols, Milan, 1906, reprinted Hildesheim and New York, 1978), vol. 1, p. 269. We would like to thank Ioannis Melianos, librarian at the monastery of Saint John on Patmos, for providing us with photographs of Patmos 121, and to Father Chrysostomos, the former librarian, who supplied a microfilm of the entire manuscript. Our thanks also to Ambrogio Cengarle for kindly providing us with a written description of the Milan folios, including a transcription of the two poems.

45 Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, esp. pp. 10–19; S. Kotzabassi and N.P. Ševčenko, with the collaboration of D.C. Skemer, *Greek Manuscripts at Princeton, Sixth to Nineteenth Century: A Descriptive Catalogue* (Princeton, 2010), pp. 122–3, fig. 167. Icons of the Heavenly Ladder are rare, but there is a late twelfth-century one on Sinai: H.C. Evans and W.D. Wixom (eds), *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era 843–1261* (New York, 1997), p. 376 (no. 247); R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki (eds), *Byzantium 330–1453* (London, 2008), p. 462 (no. 323).

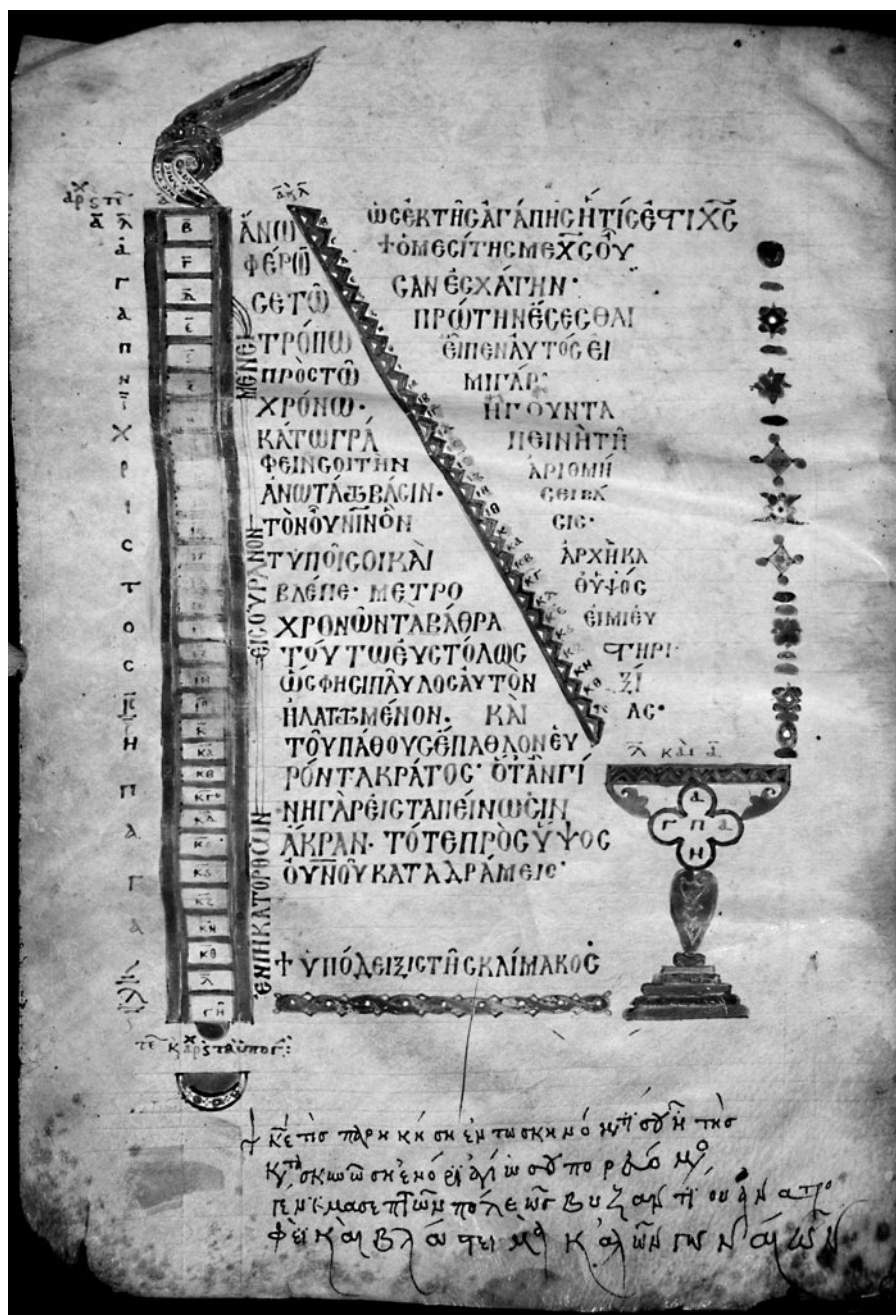


Fig. 7.5 Heavenly Ladder, eleventh century, *Heavenly Ladder* of John Klimakos, Patmos gr. 121, fol. 3v, Monastery of Saint John, Patmos (used with the permission of the Monastery of Saint John, Patmos).



of punishment for failure, a theme that is absent in Klimakos.⁴⁶ They reflect the spiritual and administrative concerns of well- and newly-established coenobitic monasteries of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and are a far cry from the mystical, Christological interpretation of the ladder that we find in the Sinai manuscript, so deeply rooted in the Klimakos text.⁴⁷ Indeed this page remains a unique witness to a time when word and image were given equal value, and worked together to build a visionary composition that must have been designed not only as a 'teaching' of the idea of the ladder but for meditation on its image.

46 See the preface by Muriel Heppell in Moore, *St. John Climacus*, p. 31.

47 Ševčenko, 'Monastic challenges'.

Visions and Meanings: Personifications in the Octateuch Cycles

Maja Kominko

Few manuscripts offer such rich ground for an art-historical exploration as the Byzantine illustrated Octateuchs, with their pictorial cycle comprising over 350 miniatures. Six illustrated Byzantine Octateuchs are known.¹ The eleventh-century codex Laur. Plut. 5.38, which contains only six miniatures illustrating the text as far as Genesis 1:26, stands apart from the others where the illustration cycle covers the entire text of the eight Biblical books and, therefore, it will not be discussed extensively.² In the remaining five Octateuchs the entire text of the eight Biblical books is illustrated. The earliest of these codices, Vat. gr. 747, is likewise dated to the eleventh century.³ Three manuscripts, Seraglio Library, cod. 8, Vat. gr. 746 and a codex formerly in the Evangelical School in Smyrna,

1 All illustrations of the six Byzantine Octateuchs were published by K. Weitzmann and M. Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs* (Princeton, 1999).

2 A.M. Bandini, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae* (3 vols, Florence, 1764), vol. 1, pp. 69–70; M. Bernabò, 'Considerazioni sul manoscritto Laurenziano Plut. 5.38 e sulle miniature della Genesi degli Ottateuchi bizantini', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 3 (1978): pp. 35–157; J. Lassus, 'La creation du monde dans les octateuques byzantins du douzième siècle', *Monuments et Mémoires, Fondation Eugène Piot* 62 (1979): pp. 85–148; J. Lowden, *The Octateuchs. A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (University Park, 1992), p. 2; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 330–31; L. Perria, 'Gli Ottateuchi in età paleologa: problemi di scrittura e illustrazione. Il caso del Laur. Plut. 5.38', in A. Iacobini and M. Della Valle (eds), *Roma L'arte di Bisanzio e l'Italia al tempo dei Paleologi (1261–1453)* (Rome, 1999), pp. 69–109.

3 Such date, suggested in the first publication of this manuscript by N. Kondakov, *Histoire de l'art Byzantine Considéré Principalement dans les Miniatures* (Paris, 1886), p. 76, was generally accepted in the later scholarship. See for example R. Devresse, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae Codices Manuscripti Recensiti Iussu Pii XII Pontificis Maximi, Praeside Johanne Mercati. Codices Vaticani Graeci* (3 vols, Rome, 1950), vol. 3, p. 263; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 2, 11–14; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 331–4. Nevertheless, a thirteenth-century date has also been proposed by J. Anderson, 'The Seraglio Octateuch and the Kokkinobaphos Master', *DOP* 36 (1982): p. 83, n. 7. Many of the illustrations have

cod. A.1, are works of the twelfth century.⁴ Finally manuscript Mount Athos, Vatopedi 602, which preserves the text only from Leviticus onward, was produced in the thirteenth century.⁵ The corresponding illustrations in the five Octateuchs follow similar iconography and the manuscripts may be included in one genealogical stemma.⁶ It appears that another manuscript related to Vat. gr. 747 was the common model for the three twelfth-century codices since none of them can be confidently identified as the model of the other two.⁷ The Vatopedi Octateuch is a copy of Vat. gr. 746.⁸

For several decades now the discussion of the illustrated Octateuchs has intertwined with a debate on the methodology, largely arising from opposition to the 'picture criticism' developed by Kurt Weitzmann.⁹ His method relied on a philological approach applied to pictures, based on the assumption that the work of a painter was akin to that of a scribe, and that he too copied his model line for line unless obliged to adapt it to a different format. The extant illuminated manuscripts were seen primarily as copies of the lost archetypes, their main interest lying in the clues they could provide for the reconstruction of the lost models. In recent decades the majority of scholars placed themselves firmly in opposition to that method, emphasizing the value and the interest of each manuscript as an individual creation.¹⁰ While their criticism was certainly

been restored and repainted in the Paleologan period, as noted by I. Hutter, 'Paläaologische Übermalung im Oktateuch Vaticanus graecus 747', *JÖB* 21 (1972): pp. 138–48.

4 Devreesse, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, p. 261; Anderson, 'The Seraglio Octateuch', pp. 89–92; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 2, 15–28; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 334–41. The miniatures of the Smyrna manuscript, lost in a fire in 1922, were published by D.C. Hesselung, *Miniatures de l'Octateuque grec de Smyrne* (Leiden, 1909).

5 Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 2, 29–33. Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 327, 341–3. The archaic characteristics in both writing and the style of the miniatures previously led scholars to attribute it to the tenth or early eleventh century: Kondakov, *Histoire de l'art*, p. 83; H. Brockhaus, *Die Kunst in den Athos-Klöstern* (Leipzig, 1891), p. 69; E.T. De Wald, 'A fragment of a Tenth-Century Byzantine Psalter in the Vatican Library' in W.R.W. Koehler (ed.), *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter* (2 vols, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), vol. 1, p. 150.

6 Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 4–5; 313–29. See also Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 35–43; 80–86; 121–2.

7 K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll, a Work of the Macedonian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1948), pp. 30–38; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 62–5, 73–5, 83; Anderson, 'The Seraglio Octateuch', pp. 101–2. See also L. Perria, 'La scrittura degli Ottateuchi fra tradizione e innovazione', in C. Barsanti (ed.), *Bisanzio e l'Occidente: arte, archeologia, storia. Studi in onore di Fernanda de' Maffei* (Roma, 1996), pp. 207–31.

8 J. Lowden, 'The Production of the Vatopedi Octateuch', *DOP* 36 (1982): pp. 116–18; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 38–43; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 327–9.

9 For the most extensive discussion of this method: K. Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Princeton, 1947) (reprinted with addenda, 1970).

10 The alternative approach to the Octateuchs is most importantly presented by Lowden, *The Octateuchs*. It focuses on the methods of book production. See also his 'The Beginnings of Biblical Illustration', in J. Williams (ed.), *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*

well founded, the opposition often turned into an outright rejection of all aspects of Weitzmann's approach, sometimes going too far the other way.¹¹ In an attempt to distance themselves from the quest for an elusive archetype, scholars often nearly ignored the issue of the lost models and the potential they offer for understanding the preserved manuscripts. Although art historians can only interpret works available to them, not the works that may not have existed, it is clear that many of the extant manuscripts ultimately derive from the same models which are now lost. These models were not slavishly copied but rather individually adapted and altered by subsequent scribes. Accordingly, the manuscripts created in this process are both copies and individual creations. Their unique characteristics can only be fully appreciated and understood when separated from the elements that derive from their models.

In what follows I briefly explore this twofold nature of the preserved Octateuchs by examining the different way in which they employ personifications. Naturally, focusing on only one minor feature offers limited insight into the vast picture cycle. However, personifications have a special potential for revealing mechanisms behind the creation of images. Often representing abstract or temporal qualities which are otherwise invisible, they provide insight into how the painter translated the verbal into the visual.¹² Focusing on the role the personifications fulfill in the miniatures, I will touch upon the issue of their possible sources only inasmuch as it is of help for understanding their significance and the reasons for their inclusion within the picture cycle.

Almost all personifications in the Octateuchs are temporal or topographical in character and the only one that does not belong to either of these groups is the

(University Park 1999), pp. 9–59. The latter book constitutes a collection of the lectures from a conference in Pittsburg in 1994 dedicated to the memory of Kurt Weitzmann, but the majority of the authors reject his methods, and the 'tyranny of the archetype' it entails. For a detailed critique of Weitzmann's methods: T.F. Mathews and A.K. Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography. The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel* (Washington, D.C., 1991), pp. 76–81; M.-L. Dolezal, 'The Elusive Quest for the "Real Thing": The Chicago Lectionary Project Thirty Years on', *Gesta* 35 no. 2 (1996): pp. 128–41; J. Lowden, 'Review of The Byzantine Octateuchs. (The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint, 2.) by Kurt Weitzmann and Massimo Bernabò', *BM* 142, no. 1169 (August 2000): pp. 502–3.

11 A very good discussion of the problem of balance in C. Mango, 'Review of Illuminated Prophet Books. A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets by John Lowden', *BM* 131, no. 1041 (December 1989): pp. 852–3.

12 By 'translating' I do not mean word for word rendering of the written text, but rather a pictorial conveying of the story, as understood by the painter. As very aptly observed by J.P. Small, *Parallel worlds of text and art* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 6, artists usually illustrated the story, not the text. For fundamental discussions of the complex relationship between text and image outlining the complexity of this relationship: M. Schapiro, *Words, Scripts, and Pictures: Semiotics of Visual Language* (New York, 1996); L. Brubaker, 'Every Cliché in the Book: The Linguistic Turn and the Text-Image Discourse in Byzantine Manuscripts', in Liz James (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58–82.

figure of Death accompanying Enoch in the illustration of Genesis 5:24.¹³ A half-naked man, identified in Vat. gr. 746 as *Thanatos*, sits on a small stool, turning away from Enoch and pointing to the left, towards the second composition, with twelve busts of the months above open sarcophagi (Fig. 8.1). The representation of Enoch and Death seems inspired not only by the brief and enigmatic reference to Enoch in Genesis 5:24, 'Enoch was well pleasing to God; and he was not found, for God translated him', but even more by the Pauline elaboration upon it in. 'By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him' (Hebrews 11:5), a passage which appears in an abridged version in the catenae.¹⁴ The idea in the miniature seems to be that Death turns away from Enoch, who is beyond its reach, so that he may not see it. The figure of *Thanatos* is unlike any ancient representation of Death, but whether this personification is a late antique¹⁵ or a medieval creation,¹⁶ it is clearly not a later addition to the

13 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 27r; Vat. gr. 747, fol. 48v; Ser., fol. 53r; Sm., fol. 18r, and Vat. gr. 747, fol. 30v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 57r, Ser., fol. 60v; Sm., fol. 21v.

14 Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, p. 47.

15 As suggested *ibid.*, pp. 47–8. For a discussion of the personification of death in antiquity: D. Burton, 'The gender of Death', in E. Stafford and J. Herrin (eds), *Personification in the Greek world: from antiquity to Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 45–68. It seems that the representation of Death in the miniature may have been influenced by that of Hades. E. Maayan-Fanar, 'Visiting Hades: a Transformation of the Ancient God in the 9th-century Byzantine Psalters', *BZ* 99/1 (2006): pp. 93–131. A similar representation of Enoch and Thanatos appears in the illustrated codices of the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a treatise written and illustrated in the sixth century, but preserved only in ninth- and eleventh-centuries copies, which nevertheless seem to follow the lost original quite faithfully. Vat. gr. 699 (dated to the ninth century), fol. 56r: Cosimo Stornajolo, *Le Miniature della Topografia Cristiana di Cosma Indicopleuste, Codice Vaticano Greco 699* (Milan, 1908), pl. 18; Sin. gr. 1186 (eleventh century), fol. 93v: K. Weitzmann and G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai: The Illuminated Manuscripts* (Princeton, 1991), fig. 233; and Laur. Plut. IX. 28 (eleventh century), fol. 116r. Whereas some of the miniatures in the twelfth-century Octateuchs may have been copied from that treatise or modified under its impact in the case of this illustration the direction of influence was most probably the opposite. The influence of Cosmas' illustrations on the Octateuchs' miniatures has been discussed in depth by C. Hahn, 'The Creation of the cosmos: Genesis illustration of the Octateuchs', *CahArch* 28 (1978): pp. 29–40; L. Brubaker, 'The Tabernacle Miniatures of the Byzantine Octateuchs', *Actes du XVe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines II: Art et Archéologie* (Athens, 1981), pp. 73–92; L. Brubaker, 'The Christian Topography (Vat. gr. 699) revisited: image, text and conflict in ninth-century Byzantium', in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization: In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 3–24; W. Wolska-Conus, 'La "Topographie Chrétienne" de Cosmas Indicopleustès: hypothèses sur quelques thèmes de son illustration', *REB* 48 (1990): pp. 155–91; H.L. Kessler, 'Through the Temple Veil: The Holy Image in Judaism and Christianity', *Kairos*, 32–3 (1990–91): pp. 53–77; E. Revel-Neher, 'Some remarks on the Iconographical sources of the Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes', *Kairos* 32–3 (1990–91): pp. 79–97; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, p. 324; D. Mouriki-Charalambous, *The Octateuch Miniatures of the Byzantine Manuscripts of Cosmas Indicopleustes* (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1970).

16 Mouriki-Charalambous, *The Octateuch Miniatures*, p. 32.



Fig. 8.1 Enoch and Thanatos, twelfth century, Vat. gr. 746, fol. 48v, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, The Vatican (courtesy of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).

miniature but one of its crucial components, without which the illustration would have lost its meaning.

The composition on the left with the bust of the months arranged above the open sarcophagi in two rows of six takes its inspiration from an apocryphal tradition which saw Enoch as an inventor of writing and of time reckoning.¹⁷ Similar representations of the 12 months with attributes of civic or agricultural pursuits, fairly common in ancient and late antique art, drop out of sight with the end of the sixth century, the miniature in the eleventh-century Vat. gr. 747 constituting its earliest reappearance.¹⁸ Although, unlike the personification of Death, the personifications of months here are not crucial for the basic understanding of the miniature, had they been omitted, some of its current significance would have been lost.

17 The figures are not named, but their iconography is consistent with their classical types: Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 48–9; E. Jeffreys, 'The Labours of the Twelve Months in twelve-century Byzantium', in Stafford and Herrin (eds), *Personification in the Greek world*, pp. 318–19. W. Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and its sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington, D.C., 1951), p. 87; D.S. Russell, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Patriarchs and Prophets in Early Judaism* (London, 1987), pp. 24–43. These discoveries are attributed to Enoch in the catenae in Vat. gr. 746, fol. 49.

18 As already noted by Jeffreys, *The Labours*, pp. 318–19.

A similar function is fulfilled by the personifications of the seasons, which accompany the sacrifice of Noah after the Flood,¹⁹ enclosed within an oval, which in Vat. gr. 746 and in Smyrna Octateuchs is held by personifications of Night and Day.²⁰ They illustrate God's promise that henceforth 'seed and harvest, cold and heat, summer and spring shall not cease by day and night' (Genesis 8:22). While not essential for the understanding of the scene, they clarify an aspect of the story which otherwise would be very difficult to glean from the picture.

A somewhat different role is fulfilled by the temporal personifications which appear already in the creation cycle. In the Laurenziana Octateuch the separation of light from darkness is illustrated by a miniature vertically divided into two zones, one light and one dark.²¹ In all other Octateuchs this composition is accompanied by personifications of Night and Day, in reference to Genesis 1:5, where we read that God named the darkness 'night' and the light 'day' (Fig. 8.2).²² Night, in the dark zone, is represented as a woman in a long garment, holding a windblown veil over her head, similar to that held by Day, in the light zone, depicted as a boy clad in a short tunic and holding a torch. Whereas the figure of Night conforms to its classical iconography, that of Day does not. In classical art Day was represented as a woman,²³ while a boy holding a torch personified Dawn.²⁴ Night and Dawn are similarly paired in a miniature accompanying the Ode of Isaiah in the Paris Psalter (Paris. gr. 139), dated to c.950–75.²⁵ Accordingly, it has been suggested that these two figures were copied from the Psalter miniature, where they illustrate Isaiah 26:9: 'I look for you during the night, my spirit within me seeks you at dawn', and were incorporated into the creation picture, where Dawn does not fit the Biblical text, which requires a personification of Day.²⁶ This seems likely, but the problem is complicated by the fact that both Night and Day (Dawn?) appear elsewhere in the Octateuch cycle.

19 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 30v; Ser., fol. 60v; Sm., fol. 21v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 57r.

20 Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, p. 55.

21 Laur. Plut. 5.38, fol. 1v.

22 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 15r; Sm., fol. 4v; Ser., fol. 27v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 20v.

23 Hemera: LIMC, vol. 4, cols 342–51; Nyx: LIMC, vol. 6, cols 939–41. See also K. Weitzmann, 'Book Illustration of the Fourth Century: Tradition and Innovation', in H. Kessler (ed.), *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 96–125, 1971, 177–8; O. Palagia, *The Pediments of the Parthenon* (Leiden, 1993), pp. 30, 34.

24 Orthros: LIMC, vol. 7, col. 145.

25 Paris. gr. 139, fol. 435v: A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris, 1984), p. 69, fig. 257.

26 Hesselting, *Miniatures de l'Octateuque*, p. 58; Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, p. 32; K. Weitzmann, 'The Ode Pictures and the Aristocratic Psalter Recension', *DOP* 30 (1976): pp. 69–70; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, p. 96, Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 17–18, 165, 306–7. The billowing veil above the head of this personification does not belong to the iconography of dawn, and does not appear in the miniature of the Paris Psalter. Most likely it was simply added by the painter to match the veil held by night.



Fig. 8.2 Separation of Light from Darkness, twelfth century, Vat. gr. 747, fol. 15r, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, The Vatican (courtesy of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).

Night accompanies the Israelites' departure from Egypt, illustrating its nocturnal timing (Exodus 12:41).²⁷ In Vat. gr. 747 the same personification appears in the composition showing the Israelites carrying the bones of Joseph (Exodus 13:19),²⁸ where the twelfth-century Octateuchs replace it with a personification of Day (or Dawn), a young man holding a torch.²⁹ The text does not provide a basis for either personification, but the likely explanation for the presence of Night is the representation of the column of fire, which according to the Bible, guided the Israelites during night, while

27 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 87r; Ser., fol. 191r; Sm., fol. 79r (or 79v); Vat. gr. 746, fol. 186r.

28 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 88v.

29 Ser., fol. 195v; Sm., fol. 80v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 190r. The windblown veil above his head is not represented, or rather it seems that it has been transformed into a halo surrounding his head. A similar transformation occurs in the miniature showing crossing of the Red Sea in some manuscripts of Aristocratic Psalters recension, where the personification of Night is transformed into one of the marching Israelites. See below, note 46.

the cloud covered them during day.³⁰ The appearance of Day/Dawn in the later Octateuchs is more difficult to explain, but it could have been inspired by Exodus 14:24: 'And it happened in the early morning watch that the Lord looked at the camp of the Egyptians in the pillar of fire and cloud (...).'³¹ From the point of view of the logic of the story, the representation of Night seems more plausible, as it accompanies the next scene, the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:27–8).³² This composition shows the Israelites who, guided by the pillar of fire, have already reached the shore while the sea engulfs Pharaoh and his army. In addition to Night, three more personifications appear in the Seraglio Octateuch and in Vat. gr. 746: two in the sea, one holding a rudder over her shoulder and the other dragging pharaoh down; the third, sitting on the shore and turning towards the drowning Egyptians (Fig. 8.3). In the Smyrna manuscript only these three are represented.

The crossing of the Red Sea is illustrated in a very similar composition in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos in Paris (Paris. gr. 510), dated to 879–82,³³ in the Leo Bible (Vat. reg. gr. 1), dated to c.930–40,³⁴ and in the Paris Psalter.³⁵ It is only in the last manuscript that all four personifications appear,³⁶ identified by inscriptions as the Red Sea with a rudder over her shoulder, the Depth dragging Pharaoh into the sea, the Desert sitting on the shore, and the Night in the sky. Thus, similar representation of the Crossing of the Red Sea precedes the oldest Octateuch by about two centuries. However, while the iconography of the scene barely changes, the number and the character of personifications vary. Whereas in all manuscripts, except Vat. gr. 747, the personification of the Red Sea accompanies the scene, its absence in the eleventh-century Octateuch is consistent with the lack of topographical personification in the picture cycle of this codex. In the later Octateuchs, the topographic personifications are otherwise limited to the Book of Joshua. They fall into two groups: seated female figures who personify cities (such as Jericho, Ai, and Gabaon),³⁷ and

30 Exodus 13:21–2; 14:19; 14:24. The pillar of cloud guiding the Israelites during day and the pillar of fire guiding them during night are mentioned in Numbers 14:14.

31 Possibly, as has already been suggested by Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, p. 163, it was simply a mistake.

32 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 89v; Ser., fol. 197v; Sm., fol. 81v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 192v.

33 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 5–7, 339–43.

34 Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, p. 96.

35 H. Buchthal, *The miniatures of the Paris Psalter, a study in middle Byzantine painting* (London, 1938), pp. 30–33; Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters*, pp. 63, 67, fig. 253.

36 It has been suggested that the later manuscripts used Paris Gregory as a model (Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, p. 339), although some argued that the miniature in Gregory Homilies derives from the lost model of the Paris Psalter (Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, p. 149).

37 Personification of Jericho: Vtp. 602, fol. 353v. Due to a mistake of the copyist it appears in the scene of Joshua sending spies to Ai (Joshua 7:2), rather than in the previous miniature, depicting the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6:21–4). Personification of Ai in the defeat of



Fig. 8.3 Crossing of the Red Sea, twelfth century, Vat. gr. 746, fol. 192v, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, The Vatican (courtesy of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).

reclining half-nude males who personify other topographical features (the river Jordan, the mountain Gilgal, the hill of the Foreskins, the mountain Ebal, and the valley of Achor).³⁸ They are always accompanied by a representation of the city or a physical feature they personify and they appear only in the first half of the Book, that is, in the part covered by the famous tenth-century Joshua Roll (Vat. Palat. gr. 43).³⁹ The Rotulus' illustrations follow the same iconography as

the Israelites at Ai (Joshua 7:4–5): Vat. gr. 746, fol. 448r; Sm., fol. 225v; Vtp., fol. 354v. Capture of Ai (Joshua 8:15–19): Ser., fol. 486v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 450v; Sm., fol. 226r (or 226v), Vtp., fol. 359v. Personification of Gabaon in the defeat of Amorites (Joshua 10:10–13): Ser., fol. 490r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 453r; Vtp., fol. 365r.

38 The river Jordan in the scene of the Ark pausing in the Midst of Jordan (Joshua 3:17 and 4:8): Sm., fol. 223r, in Ser., fol. 477v, Vat. gr. 746, fol. 443v, Vtp., fol. 345v. The mountain Gilgal in the illustration of Joshua piling 12 stones at Gilgal (Joshua 4:2–24): Sm., fol. 223v; Ser., fol. 478v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 444r; Vtp., fol. 347r. The Hill of Foreskins in the scene of the circumcision of the Israelites (Joshua 5:3): Sm., fol. 224r; Ser., fol. 480r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 445v; Vtp., fol. 349v. The Mount Ebal in the scene of Joshua praying to God on Mount Ebal (Joshua 8:30–31): Sm., fol. 226v; Ser., fol. 487v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 451r. The Valley of Achor in the stoning of Achan (Joshua 7:25): Sm., fol. 227v; Ser., fol. 485r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 449v; Vtp., fol. 357v.

39 Some scholars considered it to be an original work whose author transformed a series of separate Octateuch pictures into the continuous frieze: Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll*, pp. 39–50; 70–71; O. Mazal, *Josua-Rolle, Codex Vaticanus Pal. Graec. 431* (Graz, 1984); Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 311–12. Others have seen it as a copy of an earlier roll: C.R. Morey, *Early Christian art; an outline of the evolution of style and iconography in sculpture*

the Octateuchs, from which they are nevertheless set apart by the appearance of classically fashioned villas and landscapes, as well as the large number of personifications. Unlike in the Octateuchs, however, these personifications accompany every city, mountain or river mentioned in the text.⁴⁰ Although it has been suggested that in use of personifications the Joshua Roll reflects the common archetype of the Rotulus and the Octateuchs,⁴¹ it seems more likely that they were introduced into the picture cycle of the later Octateuchs under the influence of the Joshua Roll. The topographical personifications, which with the single exception of the Crossing of the Red Sea do not appear elsewhere in the cycle, seem completely out of character with the approach to representation of places in the Octateuchs. It is interesting to note that even in the Vatopedi codex, whose illustrator frequently took inspiration from the Roll to improve upon his model, Vat. gr. 746,⁴² when the artist added a topographical feature in the illustration of the Book of Judges 7:24–5: ‘and they pursued Madiam, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeb to Gideon from beyond Jordan’, he did not include a personification of the river, but rather employed a compositional device found elsewhere in the Octateuchs, and depicted Jordan cutting diagonally across the scene.⁴³

and painting from antiquity to the eighth century (Princeton, 1942), p. 8; M. Shapiro, ‘The Place of Joshua Roll in Byzantine History’, *GBA* 35 (1949), pp. 161–76; D. Tsellos, ‘The Joshua Roll: Original or Copy’, *ArtB* 32 (1950): pp. 275–90; A.S. Keck, ‘Observations on the Iconography of Joshua’, *ArtB* 32 (1950): p. 269; O. Kresten, ‘Oktateuch-Probleme: Bemerkungen zu einer Neuerscheinung’, *BZ* 84–5 (1990–91): pp. 501–11; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 105–18.

40 In addition to the personifications which appear in the Octateuchs, a personification of a mountain appears in the scene of the men of Jericho pursuing the spies of Joshua (Joshua 2:22–3), who according to the Bible hid in a hilly country and later ‘came down from the mountain’ on their way to the Israelites’ camp: Vat. Rot, sheet I. Moreover, a personification of the city of Jericho is depicted in the scene of Joshua meeting archangel Michael (Joshua 5:13–14): Vat. Rot, sheet IV. Finally, a personification of the cave Makeda accompanies the flight of the five kings (Joshua 10:16–18): Vat. Rot, sheet XIII. For the propositions of classical prototypes of the personification of cities in the Joshua Roll: Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll*, pp. 65–8.

41 Tsellos, ‘The Joshua Roll’, p. 280.

42 It is evident that the Vatopedi codex directly depends on the Vatican Rotulus, since it is not likely that the sheets of another roll were displayed in precisely the same way as to produce the particular errors in the division of the scenes which occur in this manuscript. One of these errors involves a personification in the illustration of Joshua despatching spies to Ai (Vtp. 602, fol. 353v): the female figure behind Joshua’s throne can be identified through a comparison with the Joshua Roll as the personification of the city of Jericho. She belongs to the previous miniature, showing the destruction of the city. Nevertheless, the divisions of the sheets of the Roll is such that she is placed on the same piece of parchment as the next scene, which confused the painter of the Vatopedi manuscript. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll*, p. 71; J. Lowden, ‘The Production of the Vatopedi Octateuchs’, *DOP* 36 (1982): pp. 122–3; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 109–14; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 236, 324, 327.

43 Lowden, ‘The Production’, p. 124, n. 50. In the illustration of Genesis 15:18, God’s promise that the land from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates will be given to Abraham’s seed, Nile and Euphrates flow in a big curve from the upper right to the lower

In Vat. gr. 747, the only personification within the Book of Joshua is the figure of Night in the conquest of Ai, where it indicates that the taking of the city occurred in nighttime (Joshua 8:3).⁴⁴ This personification is absent from other codices, where the personification of Ai appears instead.⁴⁵ This substitution is interesting because unlike the topographical personifications in the later Octateuchs, the personification of Night represents an aspect of the story (i.e. its nocturnal timing) which would otherwise be more difficult to depict. Moreover, the temporal character of this personification is in keeping with other such figures represented throughout the cycle of the Octateuchs, but in contrast to the cycle of the Joshua Roll where no temporal personifications appear.

Of all the personifications discussed above, only Thanatos accompanying Enoch is essential for the understanding of the illustration. Rather than a subsidiary figure, he is one of the main characters of the miniature. Some personifications such as the months appended to the representation of Enoch, the Seasons in the illustrations of God's covenant with Noah, and Night and Day in the creation cycle, provide additional information which goes beyond their temporal character and which would otherwise be difficult to depict. Finally, the personification of Night in the Exodus scenes and in the Joshua miniature in the Vat. gr. 747 indicates the timing of the represented events. Only the topographical personifications in the later Octateuchs seem to be mere embellishments, the omission of which would not in any way affect our understanding of the illustrated story. They appear in two places: in the Book of Joshua where they were probably introduced under the influence of the Joshua Roll, and in the crossing of the Red Sea where they were probably added under the influence of the Paris Psalter or a similar codex.⁴⁶ It is interesting

left corner in a map-like projection that contrasts with the mountainous landscape (Vat. gr. 747, fol. 37v; Ser., fol. 74v; Sm., fol. 29r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 70v); a similar composition appears in the three twelfth-century Octateuchs as the illustration of Genesis 50:10–11, describing the arrival of Jacob's funerary procession to the 'land beyond Jordan' (Ser., fol. 154v; Sm., fol. 63v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 150r); in the illustration of Numbers 32:32–3, showing the distribution of the territories on the eastern bank of Jordan (Vat. gr. 747, fol. 184v; Ser., fol. 384r; Sm. fol. 180v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 369v; Vtp., fol. 211v); in the illustration of Joshua 18:5–7, showing Joshua allotting land to the tribes (Vat. gr. 747, fol. 230v; Sm., fol. 233v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 460r; Vtp., fol. 381r); in the illustration of Joshua 19:32 in Vat. gr. 747, fol. 231v; Sm., fol. 234v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 461v, but curiously not in the corresponding miniature in Vatopedi (fol. 384r); in the illustration of Joshua 22:13–16 (Vat. gr. 747, fol. 235r; Sm., fol. 238r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 466v; Vtp., fol. 395v).

44 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 223r.

45 It has already been argued that the personification of the night belonged to the original iconography of the scene and has been substituted in the process of copying; Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, pp. 170–71; Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll*, pp. 21–2, 32, 69.

46 It appears likely that, as has been already suggested, this scene has been copied to Psalters from an Octateuch, where some personifications were added. Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, p. 165. Weitzmann, 'The Ode Pictures', pp. 69–70. It also

to observe that the influence of this manuscript seems, nevertheless, limited: the personification of Mount Sinai, which appears in the depiction of Moses receiving the Law in the Paris Psalter, is absent from the Octateuchs.⁴⁷ Possibly it was merely because the composition was different and did not allow the space for the inclusion of a personification. Within the Pentateuch, however, the additions and substitutions of personifications appear to have been made only in the miniatures where the personifications also exist in Vat. gr. 747: in the sacrifice of Noah where Day and Night are added to the representation of the seasons, in the depiction of the Israelites carrying the bones of Joseph where Dawn appears instead of Night, and in the crossing of the Red Sea where the Red Sea, the Depth and the Desert are added to the depiction of Night.⁴⁸

It seems that there are two possible scenarios. All personifications which are preserved in the later Octateuchs could have already been introduced before the splitting of the stemma. In this case their number was reduced in Vat. gr. 747 whose painter edited their use so that they would be consistently applied to visualize the aspect (most frequently temporal) which would otherwise be tricky to indicate. However, it seems unlikely that the painter would edit the cycle with the particular issue of personifications in mind, as they constitute only a very minor feature of the Octateuch cycles. Alternatively the personifications which appear in Vat. gr. 747 could have been introduced before the splitting of the stemma, while those featured only in later Octateuchs were added in the process of copying – in the Book of Joshua under a specific influence of the Joshua Roll, and in the Pentateuch only in the miniatures where some personification already existed.⁴⁹ This is not to say that all the personifications

seems that the personification of Night accompanied the miniature already when it was incorporated into the illustration of the Psalter. In almost all codices a figure with a billowing veil above the head accompanies the scene of the crossing, although in later codices it transforms from a personification into one of the marching Israelites: Athos, Lavra, cod. B25, fol. 196l; Berlin Universität Sammlung, cod. 3807, fol. 231; Rome, Vat. cod. Barb. gr. 320, fol. 221r; Washington, Dumbarton Oaks, cod. 3, fol. 72r (Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters*, figs 38, 107, 293, 326 respectively). Conversely, the personifications of the depth, the desert and the Red Sea appear only in one other codex: Petersburg, Public Library, cod. gr. 269, fol. 3r (Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters*, fig. 155).

47 Vat. gr. 747, fol. 114v; Ser., fol. 252r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 247r; Sm., fol. 106v.

48 It should also be mentioned that in some miniatures of the creation cycle in the twelfth-century Octateuchs heads of men are depicted on the surface of the earth (Ser., fol. 26v) and of the Ocean (Ser., fol. 29r; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 24v; Sm., fol. 6r) Their significance is not clear, but they have been tentatively identified as Abyss, Okeanos and Thalassa: Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 16, 20.

49 This confirms the hypothesis that Vat. gr. 747 is the closest to the common model of the Octateuchs (Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 323–6, with earlier bibliography; Lowden, *The Octateuchs*, pp. 121–2), and does not contain the most ‘reduced’ version of the cycle, as has sometimes been argued (Tselos, ‘The Joshua Roll’; Anderson, ‘The Seraglio Octateuch’, p. 83, n. 7.)

were added at the same time, or that each comes from a different source.⁵⁰ On the contrary, it seems that the Paris Psalter or a similar manuscript provided a source for personifications of Night and Day/Dawn in the illustration showing separation of light from darkness in all five Octateuchs, which must have been included before the splitting of the stemma.

In terms of function, the personifications in Vat. gr. 747 compare to those in some late antique narrative cycles in manuscripts, for example in the *Ilias Ambrosiana* (Milan, Ambrosian Library, MS F. 205 Inf), dated c.475–500,⁵¹ much better than to the Paris Psalter. This does not confirm their late antique origin, but merely indicates an ongoing tradition of using personifications in narrative cycles where their function was dictated by different requirements than in the Psalter. In the latter, the majority of personifications provide an admonitory counterpoint, or poetic commentary to the scene in a way reminiscent of those in the famous Dioscourides codex produced for Anicia Juliana c.512–13 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. med. gr. 1).⁵²

The extensive cycle of Octateuch illustration grew through gradual accretion and any attempt to disentangle the subsequent layers of addition and alteration entails a certain amount of frustration as there are simply too many variables in the puzzle. Figures, motives and details of representations could have been added at a whim at any point of the process of copying. What offers more promise for understanding the formation of the cycle are those characteristics which, like the use of personifications, seem to be indicative of a certain way of thinking about images, of a certain way of translating the verbal

50 The suggestion that all personifications have been included at the same time was put forward by Weitzmann and Buchthal who argued that because topographical personifications in the Joshua Roll repeat very similar types as those in the Paris Psalter, they must be products of the same time. It has been noted that Eremos in the Paris Psalter miniature appears to be based on the type of the reclining river or mountain god which occurs so frequently in the Rotulus, while the personification of Gibeon in the Joshua Roll is very similar to the depiction of the Melodia in Paris Psalter: Buchthal, *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter*, p. 90; Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll*, pp. 78–9. Weitzmann, 'Book Illustration of the Fourth Century', p. 157; Weitzmann and Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs*, pp. 313–29.

51 The miniature showing Enoch and Thanatos can be compared to the representation of Scamander accusing Achilles of his slayings (*Iliad*, XXI: 212). The illustration shows the river god, leaning upon an urn and raising his hand in a gesture of speech towards Achilles: Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex*, p. 168. A personification of Night accompanies the capture of Dolon (*Iliad*, X: 361 [*Ilias Ambrosiana*, pict XXXIV]): K. Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination* (London, 1977), pl. 7. It should be noted, however, that along with the personifications which interact with other figures or those that have a temporal character, personifications of places also occur in *Ilias Ambrosiana* (pict XX–XXI): R. Bianchi-Bandinelli, *Hellenistic-Byzantine miniatures of the Iliad (Ilias Ambrosiana)* (Olten, 1955), pp. 30–33.

52 L. Brubaker, 'The Vienna Dioskorides and Anicia Juliana' in H. Maguire and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds), *Byzantine Garden Culture* (Washington, D.C., 2002), pp. 210–11; Jeffreys, 'The Labours', p. 309.

into the visual.⁵³ In Vat. gr. 747 the personifications are used sparingly and, in agreement with their potential, they are employed to show the invisible, to communicate visually what is otherwise difficult or impossible to represent. Far from such economical use, the personifications added in later Octateuchs are merely classicizing additions, cluttering the already crowded cycle. Initially introduced into the cycle as visions carrying significant meaning, they gradually became visions of the classical past.

53 L. Brubaker, 'Review of The Byzantine Octateuchs by Kurt Weitzmann and Massimo Bernabo', *Speculum*, 76, no. 4 (2001): pp. 1121–4; Brubaker, 'Every Cliché', pp. 58–9. For a discussion of personification as a 'mode of thought': T.B.L. Webster, 'Personification as a mode of Greek thought', *JWCI* 17 (1954): pp. 10–21.

'Signs and symbols of your always victorious reign.' The Political Ideology and Meaning of Falconry in Byzantium

Henry Maguire

In this contribution to the *Festschrift* for Leslie Brubaker, who has done so much to illuminate questions of meaning in Byzantine imperial art, I shall be concentrating on an unusual, but nevertheless significant, iconographic motif, namely the emperor playing the part of a falconer. I shall attempt to show that this iconographic type was especially well suited to the manner in which the Byzantine emperors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries attempted to exert influence over foreign nations, both allies and foes.

It is well known that in the Early Byzantine period there was a continuation of the old Roman iconography of empire and triumph, but within a new Christian frame. The continuation of Roman imagery is best exemplified by the Barberini Diptych (Fig. 9.1).¹ This sixth-century ivory depicts the emperor triumphant on horseback, with his spear in his right hand, while the bountiful Earth, her fruits spilling out of her lap, sits on the ground and supports his foot. In the panel below the emperor, exotically clad barbarians, accompanied by elephants, lions, and tigers, are offering their tribute. All of these elements, the mounted emperor, the fruitful earth under imperial command, the subject nations with their tribute and the implicit comparison of barbarians to wild beasts, are in the tradition of earlier Roman imperial art. The new element is the addition of a third tier at the top of the composition, where we see two angels holding a bust of the supreme overlord, Christ.

Much of this triumphal iconography survived into the medieval period of Byzantium, at least up to the fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 1204. If we consider, for example, the well-known image of Basil II (976–1025) in his *Psalter*, we find the same three-tier structure as in the Barberini ivory –

1 J. Durand (ed.), *Byzance: l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), pp. 63–6 (no. 20).

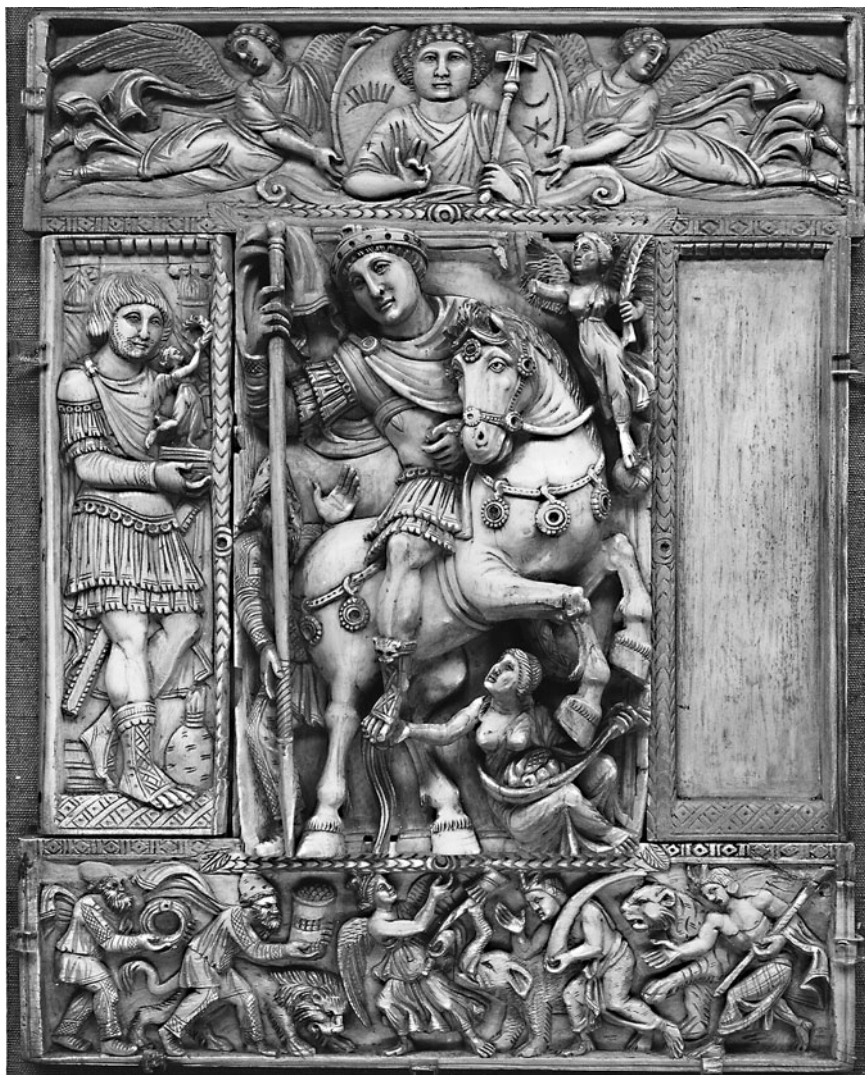


Fig. 9.1 The Barberini Diptych, sixth century, Louvre Museum, Paris (source: Réunion des Musées Nationaux).

the bust of Christ above, the emperor below, holding his spear, and below him his grovelling foes.² As for the beasts, they appear on the well-known tenth or eleventh-century ivory box at present in Troyes Cathedral, whose front and back

² Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS. Gr. 17, fol. 3r.: A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris, 1984), pp. 115–19.



Fig. 9.2 Imperial Lion Hunt, ivory casket, tenth or eleventh century, Troyes Cathedral Treasury (source: V&A images).

are carved with imperial hunts of lion and boar (Fig. 9.2).³ As in the Hadrianic reliefs depicting imperial lion and boar hunts now incorporated into the Arch of Constantine,⁴ these animals refer metaphorically to defeated foreign enemies. From literary accounts, we know that images of the imperial hunt survived in Byzantine art until the end of the twelfth century. Kinnamos tells us that, during the reign of Manuel I (1143–80), it was to be expected that those in authority should decorate their houses with paintings depicting ‘the emperor’s achievements both in war and in the slaying of wild beasts’.⁵ According to Niketas Choniatis, Andronikos I (1183–85) adorned the palace he built at the Church of the Forty Martyrs⁶ with paintings depicting his deeds before he became emperor, including scenes of wild boar being transfixed with the spear.⁷

These images displayed, or suggested, the total destruction or subjugation of the empire’s enemies, in the ancient Roman mode. But the Byzantines also developed an iconography of ‘soft power’, to use the term employed by Jonathan Shepard, an imagery more attuned to the political realities of

3 H.C. Evans and W.D. Wixom (eds), *The Glory of Byzantium, Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261* (New York, 1997), pp. 204–6 (no. 141).

4 E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977), figs 1, 3.

5 C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1972), p. 225.

6 R. Janin, *La Géographie Ecclésiastique de l’Empire Byzantin* (3 vols, 2nd ed., Paris, 1969), vol. 3.1, pp. 483–4 (no. 3).

7 Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire*, p. 235.

the last third of the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, the initial period of the decline of Byzantine power.⁸ In this time frame, we find a new visual expression of imperial authority, alongside the old images of utter defeat. This new iconography was more flattering to foreign rulers, while at the same time putting them firmly in their place. It incorporated foreigners into a ceremonial hierarchy under God – so that they were managed rather than subdued. In this respect, the new imperial images corresponded to the ‘title-diplomacy’,⁹ in which foreigners were inscribed into the Byzantine hierarchical structure by being given titles, clothes, and regalia according to their supposed rank. If there was now less hope of making foreigners submit completely, at least they could be controlled bureaucratically.

We can see the new iconography most clearly in two precious objects, the Holy Crown of Hungary, which includes enamels sent as a gift to Geza I of Hungary (1074–77) by Michael VII (1071–78), and the Pala d’Oro in Venice, which incorporates enamels sent by Alexios I (1081–1118) to the Venetian doge, Ordelafo Falier (1102–18).

The Byzantine enamels on the Holy Crown of Hungary, which date between 1074 and 1077 (reign of Geza I), present a carefully constructed court hierarchy.¹⁰ On one side, we see Christ enthroned, flanked by his archangels, Michael and Gabriel. On the other, we see the Byzantine emperor Michael VII (Fig. 9.3). He is flanked on his right side by his son Constantine, and on his left by King Geza. Geza’s rank at the bottom of the hierarchy is indicated by several signs. In the first place, unlike Michael and Constantine, he has no halo. Secondly, he has a different costume – his crown, for example, lacks the imperial pendants. And finally, his pose is more submissive; unlike the Byzantine emperors, he does not look straight ahead, in a completely frontal pose, but his pupils are turned towards the centre.

In the case of the Pala d’Oro in Venice, it is very likely that the set of enamels from the original commission of 1105 contained portraits of Alexios, of Irene, his empress, and of the reigning doge, Ordelafo Falier. It has been argued that the portraits of both the emperor and the empress initially had haloes, whereas the doge did not.¹¹ Possibly, also, the doge was shown in the more

8 On the ways in which Byzantium coped with the disparity between its power and its imperial pretensions: J. Shepard, ‘Byzantium’s Overlapping Circles’, in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (3 vols, London, 2006), vol. 1, pp. 15–55.

9 On title diplomacy: V. von Falkenhausen, ‘The Display of Byzantium in Italy. Wie stellte sich Byzanz, seinen Untertanen in Italien, deren Nachbarn und den Eroberern dar?’, in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 57–78 (esp. pp. 73–4).

10 H. Maguire, ‘The Heavenly Court’, in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, D.C., 1997), pp. 247–58 (esp. pp. 247–8), figs 1, 2.

11 D. Buckton and J. Osborne, ‘The Enamel of Doge Ordelafo Falier on the Pala d’Oro in Venice’, *Gesta* 39 (2000): 43–9.



Fig. 9.3 The Holy Crown of Hungary, Michael VII, Constantine and Geza I, 1074–77, Hungarian Parliament, Budapest (source: Foto Marburg / Art Resource NY).

subordinate pose, with his eyes turned in towards the centre. In any case, it is clear that the original iconography was later changed, for by the time of the fourteenth-century reconstruction of the *Pala d'Oro* the plaque showing Alexios had been suppressed; only the portrait of the empress was preserved. Moreover, the plaque portraying the doge had been altered in such a way as

to remove the principal marks of his subordinate status. Now he is staring straight ahead, and he most definitely has been given a halo.

From the Byzantine perspective, the sending of such precious objects to foreign rulers was an act of condescension; the receiving of the gifts was intended to be interpreted as a mark of submission by the recipients to a superior power. The later alterations to the Pala d'Oro show that in this case, at least, the Venetians clearly understood the political implications of its imagery; the original iconography had no ambiguity for them. Even if the doges were still willing to sport their Byzantine court titles until the twelfth century,¹² after 1204 their attitudes changed. Once the doge had become the master of 'a quarter and a half of the Roman empire', it was no longer possible for him to be represented with a lower rank than a Byzantine emperor.

It should be emphasized that the iconography of the Holy Crown of Hungary and the Pala d'Oro was new, and corresponded to new circumstances. The only Roman precedent lay in scenes of 'rex datus' on imperial coinage, in which the Roman emperor was seen crowning a client king, or presenting him with a diadem.¹³ The essential distinction between the 'rex datus' imagery and the medieval Byzantine formulation is that, in the Roman iconography, there was a direct transaction between the emperor and the king, but in the imagery of the Holy Crown of Hungary, both the Byzantine emperor and Hungarian King are subjects of Christ. Geza, however, is lower down in the hierarchy.

There was another medieval image that was expressive of the Byzantine exercise of soft, or diplomatic, power, namely falconry. In some texts, such as the letters of the tenth-century courtier Theodore Daphnopatis, hawks or falcons appear as symbols of the destructive powers of the emperor himself. One letter describes the gift of a partridge that had been sent to the author by the Emperor Romanos II (959–63); the bird had been killed by one of the imperial falcons. Theodore Daphnopatis wrote that the dead partridge still showed numerous wounds from the falcon's talons, as well as the wounds from the raptor's beak where it had started to open up the partridge and tear at its entrails. 'As for me,' said the courtier, 'I saw in that signs and symbols of your always victorious reign and its power against the barbarians.'¹⁴

In other medieval Byzantine writers, however, we find a somewhat different idea, namely that the birds of prey symbolize the ruler's ability to get others to do his killing for him. For example, the tenth-century *Oneirocritikon* of Achmet

12 Shepard, 'Byzantium's Overlapping circles', p. 44.

13 H. Mattingly and E.A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, II, *Vespasian to Hadrian* (London, 1926), p. 291 (no. 667), pl. 11 (no. 194) (Trajan and the king of Parthia); H. Mattingly and E.A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, III, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus* (London, 1930), p. 110 (no. 619), pl. 5 (no. 106) (Antoninus Pius and the king of Armenia); p. 110 (no. 620), pl. 5 (no. 107) (Antoninus Pius and the king of the Quadi); p. 322 (no. 1374), pl. 13 (no. 256) (Lucius Verus and the king of Armenia).

14 Letter 14: J. Darrouzès, and L.G. Westerink (trans and eds) *Théodore Daphnopatès, Correspondance* (Paris, 1978), p. 151.

informs us that 'the hawk and falcon signify a position of power second from the king'.¹⁵ He also specifies that the falcon signifies the conquest of a 'far-off distant nation' and its rule by proxy: 'if [the king] dreams that he was hunting with a falcon ... if he caught something ... he will quickly strike down this nation and rule it through his lieutenant',¹⁶ From this perspective, the most interesting text on falconry is an ekphrasis of an imperial crane hunt, involving Manuel I and his prize falcon from Georgia. This piece was written in the third quarter of the twelfth century by Constantine Manassis. In his ekphrasis, Constantine emphasizes the martial significance of the sport. Falconry, he says, is not just about enjoyment, but it concerns victories and trophies and the preservation of the hegemony of Rome. Turning to the falcons from Georgia, one of which the emperor himself trained, the author says that the emperor trained [the falcons] to be skilful, having taken them in hand, 'for he does not only know how to teach and instruct men, but also how to train swift winged birds for the killing of other birds, and in this respect makes them skilled in battle'.¹⁷ Here, then, falconry is seen as a kind of analogue of the kind of diplomacy that sought to use foreigners to fight on behalf of the empire.

In Byzantium, the political ideology of falconry was expressed visually in two ways. First, falconry was incorporated into the displays of the Hippodrome, where it could be admired by both local and foreign spectators. In the third quarter of the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela, a contemporary of Constantine Manassis, reported on his visit to Constantinople as follows:

Close to the walls of the palace is also a place of amusement belonging to the king, which is called the Hippodrome, and every year on the anniversary of the birth of Jesus the king [Manuel I] gives a great entertainment there. And in that place men from all the races of the world come before the king and queen with jugglery and without jugglery, and they introduce lions, leopards, bears and wild asses, and they engage them in combat with one another; and the same thing is done with birds.¹⁸

Thus, displays of falconry, along with demonstrations of hunting with cheetahs, were included in the performances in the Hippodrome that were put on during the reign of Manuel I.¹⁹

15 *Oneirocriticon*, 285: F. Drexel (ed.), *Achmetis Oneirocriticon* (Leipzig, 1925), p. 232; S.M. Oberhelman (trans.), *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet* (Lubbock, 1991), p. 239.

16 *Oneirocriticon*, 143: Drexel, *Achmetis Oneirocriticon*, p. 97; Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, p. 147.

17 E. Kurtz (ed.), "Ἑτέρα δύο ἀνέκδοτα πονήματα Κωνσταντίνου Μανασσῆ", *Vizantiiskii vremennik*, 12 (1905): pp. 69–98 (esp. pp. 81–2).

18 M.N. Adler (trans. and ed.), *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London, 1907), p. 21.

19 For the staging of hunts by cheetahs in the hippodrome: E.D. Maguire and H. Maguire, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton, 2007), p. 84, figs 81, 82. The performance of hunts with birds and cats in the Hippodrome, where jugglers, acrobats, and mimes also performed, may explain why some Byzantine images of hunting with cheetahs depict the trainers wearing the pointed caps associated with the mimes.

The Byzantine emperors also exported the imagery of imperial falconry through the medium of art, as can be seen in the case of a group of three eleventh or twelfth-century enamelled medallions depicting riding emperors with birds of prey in their right hands, which were later incorporated into the fourteenth century refashioning of the Pala d'Oro in San Marco (Figs 9.4 and 9.5).²⁰ In the fourteenth-century reconstruction of the altarpiece, there is a series of seven enamelled medallions at the base of the frame. These medallions, which are set immediately beneath the row of rectangular panels containing the portraits of the Doge Ordelafo Falier and the Empress Irene, constitute a subordinate zone which is primarily devoted to imperial imagery. Just as the panels containing the doge and the empress in the row above flank a plaque depicting the orant Virgin,²¹ so also the seven medallions in the frame below flank a central roundel with the Virgin in prayer. Reading from left to right, along the bottom of the frame, we find the following subjects in the medallions:

1. An emperor, wearing a loros, a crown with pendants, and a long scarf that blows to the left, rides a speckled dark-coloured horse and holds a falcon on his outstretched right hand. A dog runs beneath the horse in pursuit of a rabbit, or hare, portrayed beside the horse on the right (Fig. 9. 4).²²
2. Similar to no. 1, except that the emperor's horse is white (Fig. 9.5).²³
3. A tree enclosing two addorsed peacocks and framed by two knotted snakes.²⁴
4. (The central medallion) The Virgin, in half figure, turns to the right in prayer.²⁵
5. The ascent of Alexander, represented by two addorsed leaping griffins, with the head of Alexander in a medallion between them.²⁶
6. Similar to nos 1 and 2 (the two medallions with imperial falconers), except that the horse has more colourful speckles.²⁷
7. Frontal bust of Saint Constantine, wearing crown and loros.²⁸

The fourteenth-century restorers of the Pala d'Oro evidently took these enamels from more than one source. The medallions nos 1, 2, and 6, with

See, for example, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. gr. 64, fol. 6r.: J. Ebersolt, *La Miniature byzantine* (Paris and Brussels, 1926), p. 49 (no. 2), pl. 42.

20 H.R. Hahnloser and R. Polacco, *La Pala d'Oro* (Venice, 1994), pp. 65–6, figs 148–50.

21 Ibid., plate after p. 194.

22 Ibid., fig. 150.

23 Ibid., fig. 149.

24 Ibid., fig. 151.

25 Ibid., fig. 91.

26 Ibid., fig. 152.

27 Ibid., fig. 148.

28 Ibid., fig. 104.



Fig. 9.4 Emperor on horse back, Pala d'Oro, eleventh or twelfth century enamel (incorporated into the fourteenth century refashioning of the Pala d'Oro at the base of the frame), San Marco, Venice (source: H.R. Hahnloser and R. Pollaco, *La Pala d'Oro* [Venice, 1994], fig. 150).



Fig. 9.5 Emperor on horse back, Pala d'Oro, eleventh or twelfth century enamel (incorporated into the fourteenth century refashioning of the Pala d'Oro at the base of the frame), San Marco, Venice (source: H.R. Hahnloser and R. Pollaco, *La Pala d'Oro* [Venice, 1994], fig. 149).

the imperial falconers, are very similar in style and technique, and appear to have come from the same set. All three show a dog beneath the horse, and a rabbit to its right, and two of them show the rider with a scarf blowing to the left. The three medallions differ mainly in the colours of the horses. However, the roundel no. 7, with Saint Constantine, has plainly been cut down on its right side, to better match the dimensions of the others. Evidently this enamel of an imperial saint was pressed into service in the fourteenth century to fill out the series of imperial figures at the bottom of the Pala d'Oro and to create a symmetrical composition centred on the Virgin. Without a close technical examination, it is difficult to determine how closely related the two medallions with the tree (no. 3) and Alexander (no. 5) are to the three medallions with imperial falconers.

What was the source of the three medallions with imperial falconers? It is tempting to suggest that they originally formed part of a gift from the Byzantine emperor to the Venetian doge. Possibly the three enamels belonged to a single object with repeated imperial images, similar to the draw-loom silks showing emperors hunting lions,²⁹ or to the ivory casket at Troyes. Alternatively, the enamels could have decorated multiple objects in the same donation, such as the groups of enamelled objects listed in the *Book of Treasures and Gifts*, which inventories precious items given by the Byzantines to the Abbasid and Fatimid courts.³⁰ As to the nature of the objects to which the enamels may originally have been affixed, one can only speculate. The possibilities include honorific garments, saddles,³¹ and horse trappings.³²

In our quest for meanings and messages we might, then, propose that the three imperial riders at the base of the Pala d'Oro originally formed part of a gift that was intended to express the Byzantine exercise of power by proxy. The emperor himself appears in the guise of the falconer, he who 'trained' the birds to be skilful, having taken them in hand. If the original recipient was the doge, then it is the ruler of Venice who, instructed by his master, plays the part of the imperial falcon in pursuit of the hares, which represent the emperor's enemies. One thinks, for example, of the Byzantine need for naval assistance from the Venetians against the Normans during the reign of Alexios I.

It is hard to determine how much of this symbolism may have been understood by the recipients of the medallions. There was always room for ambiguity in the interpretation of costly gifts; if the donors saw them as signs of

29 A. Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving: AD 400 to AD 1200* (Vienna, 1997), p. 175, pl. 24B (silk from Mozac).

30 O. Grabar, 'The Shared Culture of Objects', in Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, D.C., 1997), pp. 115–29.

31 Such saddles are described in the *Book of Treasures and Gifts*: Grabar, 'Shared Culture of Objects', p. 122 (gift, from the Byzantine emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir).

32 Enamelled bridles are recorded in the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*, book 1, chapter 26; A. Vogt (ed.), *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, Le Livre des Cérémonies* (2 vols, Paris, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 92, 97.

condescension towards an inferior, the receiving party, on its part, could read them as tribute.³³ Nevertheless, from the Byzantine perspective the symbol of the trained and obedient falcon was a new and more subtle variant of the old idea of the victorious emperor destroying wild beasts by himself; it was an image more in tune with the new political reality in which the Byzantines found themselves in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries. But the period during which this imagery would have been especially meaningful was relatively brief. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the prestige of Byzantium was still such that the emperors could continue to imagine their powerful allies to be subordinate in rank, and perhaps some allies could believe it too. After 1204 such a model of diplomatic relations became untenable.

33 On this ambiguity: Shepard, 'Byzantium's Overlapping circles', p. 30.

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Messages in the Landscape: Searching for Gregory Nazianzenos in Cappadocia (with Two Excursions to the Çanlı Kilise)

Robert Ousterhout

Most historians of Byzantine art know Gregory Nazianzenos through the deluxe editions of his homilies, which often include illustrations of his life. Foremost among these is the ninth-century Paris Gregory (Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. gr. 510), amply discussed by Leslie Brubaker, to whom this volume of essays is dedicated.¹ A well-known, three-registered miniature on fol. 542r prefaces the saint's *vita* by Gregory the Presbyter, but the illustrations are frustratingly generic: Gregory leaves his family by ship (not possible from Cappadocia), is consecrated as a bishop (of Constantinople?), and is buried (where?). As Brubaker emphasizes, the accumulated detail and lack of specificity bespeak a universalizing interpretation to the life of Gregory.² Regarded as a saint by both the Eastern and Western churches, his universality seems to have affected the later history of his relics as well. In contrast to miniaturists' generalized vision of Gregory's life, in what follows, I shall attempt to put Gregory in his place by examining the sites associated with him in Cappadocia and by following the peregrinations of his relics. Finally, I shall look for evidence of special devotion to Gregory in Cappadocia during

1 L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge, 1999). In my first encounter with Leslie Brubaker in 1980–81, when we were both Junior Fellows at Dumbarton Oaks, she was hot on the trail of 'Greg Naz,' writing a dissertation on 'The Illustrated Copy of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. gr. 510)', The Johns Hopkins University, 1983, Ph.D. diss. Leslie was very much on my mind when I later (repeatedly) stumbled across relics, architecture, and images associated with Gregory. I dedicate this paper to her with respect and affection – and thanks for the dance.

2 Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, pp. 134–7 and fig. 46.

the Byzantine period. That is to say, while the resonance of Gregory's message was universal, might we find echoes of it in the landscapes he knew.

Where was/is Gregory?

Historical texts associate several ancient toponyms of western Cappadocia with the local metropolitan and church father, Gregory Nazianzenos (c.325–89): the towns of Nazianzos, Diokaisareia, and Sasima; the village of Karbala, and the estate of Arianzos.³ Despite the literary testimony, none of these places seems to have been particularly large, and after the Early Christian period none was particularly important. By the fifteenth century, most had been either abandoned or forgotten. Early modern travelers and scholars thus attempted to associate a variety of sites with Gregory based on limited textual information. The master of Anatolian geography, Sir William M. Ramsay, still assumed in 1890 that Nazianzos and Diokaisareia were one and the same, while attempting to sort out whether Karbala was the village and Arianzos the estate, or *vice versa*.⁴ Diokaisareia is more likely the present village of Tilköy, near Derinkuyu, although the church of Saint Andrew, which survived in ruins into the last century, is too late in date to have been the church built by Gregory.⁵ Sasima, perhaps the present Hasanköy, north of Niğde, can be dismissed as a brief, unhappy chapter in Gregory's ecclesiastical career (372) from which nothing in the way of physical evidence is to be expected (Fig. 10.1).⁶ Nazianzos, Karbala, and Arianzos deserve further discussion.

Nazianzos

We know of Nazianzos primarily from the writings of Gregory. His synonymous father, who preceded him as bishop, had built a grand octagonal church there, which his son regarded as a 'fitting memorial of his magnanimity'.⁷ While nothing of the church remains, it (or at least Gregory's description of it) has enjoyed some popularity in scholarship as an example of the octagonal

3 F. Hild and M. Restle, *Kappadokien* (Vienna, 1981), pp. 150–51, 171, 244–5.

4 W.H. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890), p. 285.

5 Hild and Restle, *Kappadokien*, p. 171, following W. Ruge, 'Nazianzos', *Paulys Realencyclopädie* (Stuttgart, 1935), vol. 16/2, pp. 2100–2101.

6 Hild and Restle, *Kappadokien*, pp. 272–3. Basil appointed Gregory bishop of Sasima, but he returned to Nazianzos within the year.

7 Gregory Nazianzenus, *Orat.* XVIII.39 in PG 35:1037; trans. C. Mango *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453: Sources and Documents* (Toronto, 2007), pp. 26–7. For an overview of historical references: Hild and Restle, *Kappadokien*, pp. 244–5.

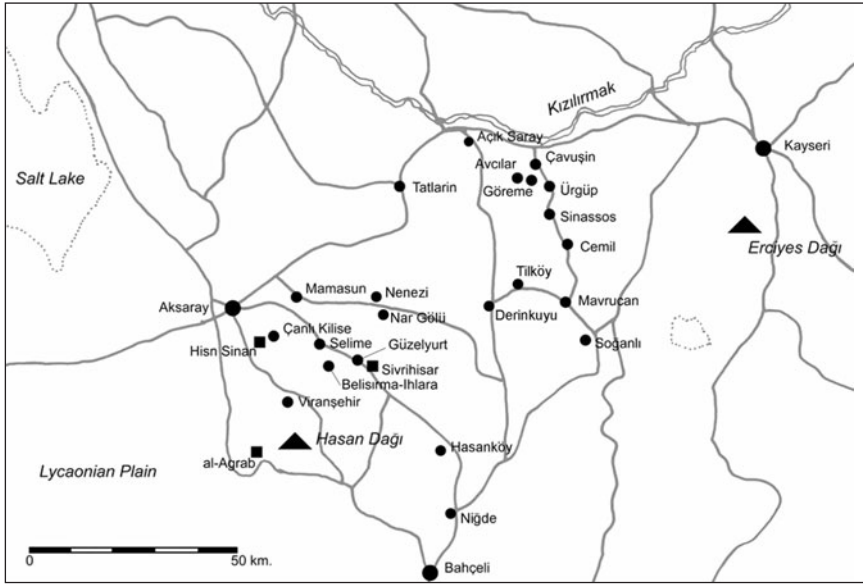


Fig. 10.1 Map of Cappadocia, showing sites discussed (map: author).

martyrium.⁸ Bishops of Nazianzos are noted from the fourth century onward, and the see was elevated to a metropolis in the eleventh century under Romanos IV (1068–71). By the fourteenth century, however, the see seems to have long since been abandoned.

Writing in 1842, William Hamilton proposed to associate Nazianzos with Viranşehir, on the slopes of Hasan Dağı, as the position of the evocatively ruinous site seemed to correspond with distances given in the Jerusalem Itinerary.⁹ This identification found great currency in the nineteenth century and was still cited as late as 1966.¹⁰ It is repeated and amplified by S. Terraz, following a visit he made to the area in 1900, which he published as a ‘pilgrimage’ to Nazianzos.¹¹ Although not well known and fraught with errors, Terraz’s account is worth re-examining.

At first glance Terraz’s account, whose familiarity with historical geography appears minimal at best, seems tedious and anecdotal. After several pages

8 A. Birnbaum, ‘Die Oktogone von Antiochia, Nazianz und Nyssa’, *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 36 (1913): p. 207; E. Baldwin Smith, *The Dome: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Princeton, 1950), p. 31.

9 W.J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia with Some Account of their Antiquities and Geology* (2 vols, London, 1852), vol. 2, pp. 226–30.

10 H. Leclercq, ‘Nazianze’, *Dictionnaire d’Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* (Paris, 1935), vol. 12, p. 1054; T. Athanasiou Gritsopoulos, in *Θρησκευτική και Ήθική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια* (Athens, 1966), vol. 9, p. 292.

11 S. Terraz, ‘Un pèlerinage à Nazianze’, *Echos d’Orient* 4 (1900–1901): pp. 171–7.

of unpleasant travel, he arrived at Viranşehir, which both he and the local Greeks took to be Nazianzos. 'Ah! s'écrite-il aussitôt, c'est Nazianze, la patrie de saint Grégoire le Théologue', the Greek priest at Helvadere spontaneously exclaimed when he asked to visit Viranşehir.¹² The priest probably knew this identification from Western travelers, who had read Hamilton, rather than from local tradition, for in the time of Evliya Çelebi, Helvadere was a Muslim village, and thus the continuity of local memory from Byzantine times is questionable.¹³ Terraz was disappointed by the ruins, in which he found nothing grand, nothing original, and nothing on which to fix his admiration. Moreover, he was unable to find any trace of an inscription. Thus, after saying a prayer for Saint Gregory, he intended to return immediately to Aksaray. But he was detained by the hospitality of the locals and ultimately forced to spend the night in the nearby village of Euren-Keuī (probably Karaören). This delay proved fortuitous for Terraz, and equally fortuitous for the reader who has suffered this far through his banal account.¹⁴ At supper, the village *muhtar* offered to show Terraz a ruined monastery nearby. The church, he was told, had a belfry and well-preserved paintings.

First Excursion to the Çanlı Kilise

Although Terraz failed to provide a name for the site, what follows in his text is without a doubt a description of the Çanlı Kilise church and settlement. Moreover, it represents the earliest published description of the site. Josef Strzygowski's account (based on that of Jakov Ivanovich Smirnov), appeared in 1903; that of Hans Rott was published in 1908, and that of Gertrude Bell in 1909.¹⁵ Terraz noted that because the church was hidden by the crest of the plateau from the standard routes, it remained almost unknown to travelers; without the confidences of the villagers he would not have known of its existence. Many of the details he provided match those recounted by later visitors: the tall dome of the church rose above two piers, the other two having been knocked down by the locals hunting for treasure (as Bell has also

12 Ibid, p. 174.

13 A. Berger, 'Viranşehir (Mokisos), eine byzantinische Stadt in Kappadokien', *BZ* 48 (1998): pp. 426–9.

14 And thus (to my great embarrassment) I failed to note Terraz's account in my study *A Byzantine Settlement in Cappadocia* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

15 J. Strzygowski, *Kleinasien, ein Neuland der Kunstgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 157; H. Rott, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler aus Pisidien, Kappadokien, und Lykien* (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 257–62; W.M. Ramsay and G.L. Bell, *The Thousand and One Churches* (London, 1909; new edition R.G. Ousterhout and M.P.C. Jackson [eds], Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 404–18; see Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, pp. 10–13.

noted).¹⁶ The church stood because of the solidity of its construction, of brick and stone set with strong beds of cement. The wall paintings of the interior had a distinctive blue background with inscriptions in white letters, but the only subject he was able to discern (probably incorrectly) was a Flight into Egypt; they were painted on a sturdy plaster made of sand, crushed brick, lime, and tow.¹⁷ He also observed the barrel-vaulted masonry annexes to the north of the church. These connected to rock-cut passages extending deep into the mountain, which (as today) were inaccessible because of landslides. He also found the distinctively thin windows noteworthy, comparing them to the loopholes of a castle, and commenting that they would have protected the interior during times of excessive heat.

Perhaps most important in Terraz's account is his description of the extensive settlement that surrounds the church, with cells carved into the rock. Some of the grottoes were large enough to hold 100 to 200 people; others had carved vertical surfaces 'pierced by small niches that look something like birds' nests'.¹⁸ As he related, the settlement continued in an arc around the mountain and extending for several kilometers, with innumerable spacious grottoes, so that several thousand people could have lived at the site without difficulty. He also noticed the significant presence of burials at the site, with both an open-air cemetery (also described by Rott) and burial chambers cut into the rock.¹⁹ Assuming that this was a monastery, Terraz called the settlement a *laura*, while puzzling over its possible identification. He concluded by noting that Gregory had written quite often of the religious – hermits and penitents – who sanctified the landscape around Nazianzos, and Terraz suggested that the settlement should be understood in that context.

Back to Nazianzos

Much of Terraz's interpretation can be discounted. The settlement at the Çanlı Kilise was a town, probably an administrative center, and not a monastic community, although its Byzantine name remains elusive.²⁰ Viranşehir has come to be identified with either Nora or – more likely – Mokisos.²¹ Moreover, a decade before Terraz's account, Ramsay had proposed to associate Nazianzos with the village of Nenezi, noting the similarity of the Ottoman place-name and the local tradition among the Greek-speaking

16 Ramsay and Bell, *Thousand and One Churches*, p. 412; Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, p. 11.

17 For the wall paintings: Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, pp. 34–47.

18 Terraz, 'Pèlerinage', p. 176.

19 Rott, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler*, pp. 257–62; Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, p. 10.

20 Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, *passim*.

21 Berger, 'Viranşehir', pp. 415–26, with additional bibliography.

Christian population of nearby Gelveri (modern Güzelyurt).²² Indeed, the general consensus now associates Nazianzos with Nenezi (modern Bekârlar) – either with the center of the village or somewhere nearby, despite the almost complete absence of archaeological remains.²³ Friedrich Hild and Marcel Restle noted traces of walls and a spoliated fifth-century capital in the Seljuk türbe of Sultan Bekâr west of the village.²⁴ Within the center of the village, Eleni Karatza noted ruins that she suggested may have been of two churches.²⁵ These were visited more recently by Justin Mossay, who described the remnants of vaults.²⁶ A brief visit to the area by the author in 2007 could add nothing more, although a proper survey of the area utilizing ground-penetrating radar could be useful.

What is perhaps worth taking into consideration is the proximity of Nenezi to the Nar Gölü, a volcanic lake whose sediments have recently been studied.²⁷ Based on the evidence of annual deposits of pollen and carbon on the lakebed, the study projects a period of landscape abandonment from c.670 to 950 CE – the earlier date marked by a sudden end to intensive agricultural investment, with cultivation replaced initially by invasive weeds and then secondary woodlands. The latter date marks the appearance of cereal-based agriculture and pastoralism. Change is the result of human impact on the environment and corresponds to the destabilization of the region brought about by the Arab incursions.²⁸ Lying in the open agricultural plain, Nazianzos, barely five kilometers to the northwest, must have experienced the dramatic changes at the end of antiquity that the pollen record reveals. In light of this, we may question the fate of the town, or, indeed, if the later bishops of Nazianzos mentioned in the ecclesiastical record are no more than absentee office holders. Interestingly, the date of the revival of the region, c.950, corresponds to the removal of the relics of Gregory by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (913–59), to be discussed below.

22 Ramsay, *Historical Geography*, p. 285.

23 Hild and Restle, *Kappadokien*, pp. 244–5.

24 Ibid. For views of the area: M. and N. Thierry, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1963), pls 8–9a.

25 E. Karatza, *Καππαδοκία, ο τελευταίος Ελληνισμός της περιφέρειας Ακσεράι Γκέλβερι (Καρβάλης)* (Athens, 1985), p. 121.

26 J. Mossay, 'Nazianze, Nenezi, Bekârlar', *Byzantion* 71 (2001): pp. 438–49.

27 A. England, W.J. Eastwood, C. Neil Roberts, R. Turner, and J.F. Haldon, 'Historical landscape change in Cappadocia (central Turkey): a palaeoecological investigation of annually-laminated sediments from Nar lake', *The Holocene* 18/8 (2008): pp. 1229–45.

28 I have hypothesized a similar cultural break in relation to the region around the Çanlı Kilise: Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, pp. 172–6.

Arianzos

The site most often identified as Gregory's familial estate of Arianzos is the high mountain valley at Sivrihisar above Gelveri. There Gregory worshiped at a church dedicated to the Holy Martyrs, and there he may have been buried.²⁹ Remnants of a Byzantine fortress survive on the mountaintop, and in the village below are two rock-cut churches, probably from the nineteenth century, which were summarily dismissed by Gertrude Bell as 'dull as usual'.³⁰ The only prominent monument in the area is the Kızıl Kilise, the so-called Red Church (Fig. 10.2). The only masonry church in Cappadocia to preserve its dome, it stands in picturesque isolation surrounded by fields of grain. While early visitors to the region note the church, they did not associate it with Gregory.³¹ The local Greeks of Gelveri knew the church as the monastery of Hagios Panteleimon.³² Only in 1908 did Hans Rott attempt to connect the church to the Theologian: 'I do not hesitate to see the Red Church as the place where the bones of the saint from Arianzos rested,' he wrote.³³ He argued on the basis of its design that the church was a memorial church.³⁴ Unusually, its cruciform plan is amplified by a single side aisle, flanking the nave on the north side. This was originally separated from the nave by closure panels, as the cuttings in the piers indicate. Thus isolated, the aisle was likely the setting for a special burial or venerated tomb.

Both Rott and Bell viewed the twin-nave plan in central Anatolian churches as memorial or funerary in function.³⁵ At the Red Church, the suggestion of a special function is encouraged by the presence of a spring, which Rott called a *hagiasma*, located immediately to the south of the church.³⁶ While Rott was aware that the church must postdate Gregory – he suggests a fifth-century date – he argues that his remains were housed there, and that the building was constructed to serve as his mausoleum.³⁷ Hild and Restle dismiss Rott's identification of the Red Church as Gregory's burial church.³⁸ More recently, John McGuckin accepts Nazianzos as the site of Gregory's tomb but suggests that part of his remains were subsequently transferred to the Red Church.³⁹ All

29 Hild and Restle, *Kappadokien*, pp. 150–51.

30 Gertrude Bell, letter 11 July 1907: <http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/>. (accessed 22/09/09).

31 W.F. Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea and Armenia* (2 vols, London, 1842), vol. 1, p. 203.

32 Rott, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler*, p. 278.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 282.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 276–82.

35 Ramsay and Bell, *Thousand and One Churches*, pp. 390–96 (esp. p. 390); Rott, *Kleinasiatische Denkmäler*, esp. pp. 128, 287.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 281.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 282.

38 Hild and Restle, *Kappadokien*, p. 150 ('sicher nicht').

39 J. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, New York, 2001), p. 400.



Fig. 10.2 'Red Church' seen from the southeast, end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century, Kızıl Kilise, Sivrihisar, Cappadocia, Turkey (photo: author).

the same, it remains uncertain if Gregory was initially interred in Nazianzos or Arianzos; the connection of the Red Church to Gregory cannot be confirmed, however likely it might seem.

The most thorough treatment of the architecture is provided by Marcel Restle, who dated the church toward the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.⁴⁰ The special sacred character of the building suggested to him a pilgrimage church, and he noted the numerous crosses and other graffiti carved on the south side of the church near the spring. But he did not mention Gregory and downplayed the oral tradition of a dedication to the healing saint, Panteleimon.⁴¹ The church is now being restudied and stabilized as a part of its designation to the World Monuments Watch of endangered sites. A sample taken from one of the wooden tie beams at the base of the dome was subjected

40 M. Restle, *Studien zur frühbyzantinischen Architektur Kappadokiens* (2 vols, Vienna, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 47–63, 171; vol. 2, plans 35–8, figs 108–30; N.K. Moutsopoulos, *Η «Κόκκινη Εκκλησία» (Kızıl Kilise) κοντά στο Sivri Hisar της Καππαδοκίας* (Thessaloniki, 2007), adds nothing new to the discussion.

41 Restle, *Studien*, vol. 1, p. 63.

to radiocarbon analysis in 2005 and yielded a range of dates between 391 and 536 CE, and an early sixth-century date seems most likely.⁴²

Karbala

William Ainsworth, writing in 1842, called the town Gelvedery, commenting on the presence of a 'goodly stone church in the vale' and from a conversation with the priest, noted 'they claim a high antiquity to the site of Gelvedery', but did not mention Gregory.⁴³ Ramsay may have been the first scholar to note the association of Gelveri (Güzelyurt) with the village of Karbala, near which Gregory owned the estate called Arianzos.⁴⁴ This identification has been generally accepted, with some amplifications made in the oral history of the town. As Gertrude Bell related, following her visit in 1907:

Gelvere was the estate belonging to St Gregory Nazianzos – Nazianzos is about 4 hours away. I saw his country house in the afternoon, a charming cave with panels cut on the walls and crosses on the roofs. In the 4th century, when he lived there, Gelvere was an important place in the Christian world. Rome and Constantinople listened to St Gregory's voice – they don't pay so much attention to the remarks of the present dweller in the cave house. I saw too the big church built in his honour with all his bones done up in silk cloths and laid in a box, and a cross sent from Mount Athos laid upon them.⁴⁵

Despite Byzantine accounts to the contrary, since at least the eighteenth century the cathedral of Karbala claimed to possess the relics of Gregory, which were the objects of local pilgrimage. It is unclear when the relics first appeared or whence they came. The church itself seems to have been erected on the site of an older church, claimed by the locals to have been built by Theodosius I (379–95) and dedicated to the Holy Cross (Fig. 10.3). Both Archimandritis I. Pantelemonidis in 1881 and Anastasios Levidis in 1899 repeated this tale; Levidis concluded that the architect who repaired the church in 1835 had erased the old inscription and renamed the church after Gregory.⁴⁶ However, a firman of 1806 is preserved in Nea Karvali, referring specifically to an existing church named for Saint Gregory.⁴⁷ Similarly, in 1815 Kyrillos noted a large and attractive domed church in the center of town dedicated to Saint

42 I thank Pierre Couprie for sharing this information with me.

43 Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, vol. 1, pp. 201–3.

44 Ramsay, *Historical Geography*, pp. 285–6.

45 Gertrude Bell, letter 11 July 1907: <http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/> (accessed 22/09/09).

46 Discussed in D. Petropoulos, 'Η θρησκευτική ζωή στην περιφέρεια Άκσεράι Γκέλβερι (Athens, 1971), p. 69 (with earlier bibliography). See also A.V. Levidis, *Αἱ ἐν μονολίθοις μοναὶ τῆς Καππαδοκίας καὶ Λυκαονίας* (Constantinople, 1899), p. 128.

47 Petropoulos, *Θρησκευτική ζωή*, p. 68.

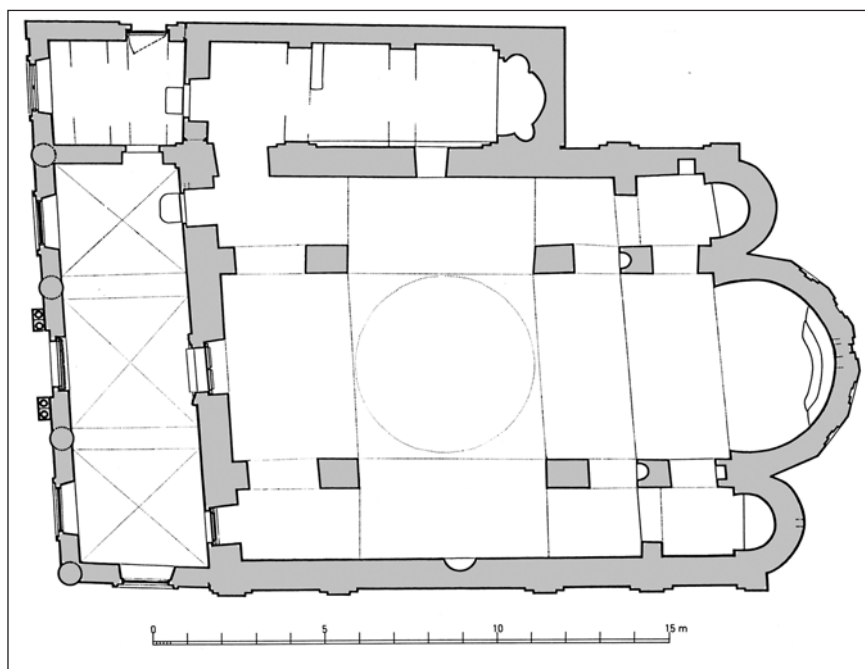


Fig. 10.3 'Red Church', end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century, Kizil Kilise, Sivrihisar, Cappadocia, Turkey, plan (plan: author; redrawn after Ağiryılmaz).

Gregory.⁴⁸ Another firman of 1834 gives permission to repair the church of Saint Gregory as requested by the Christian community. Thus while an older dedication is possible, it cannot be securely documented.

Gertrude Bell opted not to discuss the church, as it had been largely restored, and most scholars have followed her lead in overlooking it.⁴⁹ The annexes to the church – the north annex and the narthex – are certainly recent, and there appear to be at least two phases to the additions: the construction of an open portico, the closing of the portico, the addition of the north chapel. In addition, the church proper was clearly restored in the nineteenth century; the dome must date from that time, and there is evidence of reconstruction along the upper walls. However, other features of the church stand in sharp contrast to nineteenth-century church construction on Cappadocia. The cross-in-square plan, with a fully developed tripartite sanctuary and tall transept arms, the stepped pilasters of the exterior that correspond to the interior spatial divisions, and the niched, faceted apse all fit within the growing picture of Middle Byzantine architecture in

48 Ibid. See also Kyrillos, *Ἱστορική περιγραφή* (Vienna, 1815), p. 28.

49 Ramsay and Bell, *Thousand and One Churches*, pp. 421–2, and figs 346–7.

Cappadocia.⁵⁰ Indeed, the best possible comparison for its design may be the ruined tenth-century Karagedik Kilise in the Peristrema Valley.⁵¹ Moreover, it is clear from the documentary evidence that a large and impressive church existed in Karbala *before* the restoration of the 1830s, as Kyrillos testifies. It is unlikely the Ottoman authorities would have allowed the construction of a domed church long before the Tanzimat period (1839–76, which allowed greater freedom to religious minorities); on the other hand, the restoration of an existing church would have been acceptable. Finally, a few details at the east end, such as the anomalies in the exterior masonry and traces of a *synthronon* in the interior of the apse, may indicate that the church was built on the site of an older foundation.

Gregory Again

We can situate the church in Gelveri, but what about Gregory himself? The oral tradition among the Gelverioties tells that in the middle of the eighteenth century, men came from Constantinople wanting to find the bones of all the Fathers of the Church. When they asked for the body of Gregory, members of the İközöglu and Didymopoulos families (curiously, in Turkish and Greek both family names translate as ‘son of the twin’) took the proper body from its burial place and sent the wrong relics to Constantinople; these are now venerated on Mount Athos. The authentic relics were preserved in the church of the Timio Xylo at Gelveri, whose name was subsequently changed to Hagios Gregorios.⁵² A portion of the skull of Gregory is recorded at Vatopedi Monastery and may be from this translation; it was apparently a gift from the Patriarchate, with a letter to authenticate it.⁵³ And there are other pieces of the Theologian on the Holy Mountain: Hilander and Hagiou Pavlou Monasteries each claim to possess one of the saint’s feet.⁵⁴ Dionysiou, Koutloumousiou, Xeropotamou, Stavronikita, Xenophontos, Gregoriou, and Rossikou claim to have relics as well.⁵⁵

50 Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, p. 65.

51 Restle, *Studien*, vol. 2, plan 48.

52 This information was related to me in 1986 by an elderly resident of Nea Karvali, whose family had come from Gelveri. I thank Kaplanes Iosefides for helping with the interviews.

53 G. Smyrnakis, *Τό Ἅγιον Ὄρος* (Athens, 1901), pp. 446–7.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 488.

55 *Ibid.*, pp. 511, 525, 552, 617, 624, 632, 669.

Nea Karvali

With the population exchange in 1924, however, the tradition, the alleged relics, and the local pilgrimage were transferred to Nea Karvali, east of Kavala in northern Greece. A visitor to Nea Karvali will find today, along with a Cappadocian Heritage Center, a small museum, and a folk dance troupe, a domed church bearing a vague resemblance to the church in Gelveri, within which are enshrined the relics of Gregory, his father, and his sister Gorgonia (Fig. 10.4). They are housed in a *proskynetarion* positioned on the north side of the nave – that is, in the same position it occupied in Gelveri. The relics continue to be venerated locally: the faithful take a piece of cotton wool and with it make the sign of the cross on the protective glass surface; the cotton is then dipped into the oil of a lamp burning above the relics and taken away as a ‘blessing’ of Gregory. The wooden box in which Gregory’s relics were translated is painted with his image and displayed in the south transept.

The relocation of both the relics and the local pilgrimage associated with them is interesting from an anthropological perspective and parallels the medieval practice of the construction of new holy sites with the transfer of relics, architectural forms, and dedications.⁵⁶ It seems that the church of Gelveri was consciously imitated by the architect, Stelios Stelianou, who began the church a decade after the population exchange; his daughter remembered discussions over the design of the new church, with a photograph of the Gelveri church present, in their home.⁵⁷ Following the architect’s death, however, construction was completed by a non-Cappadocian contractor, who introduced several modifications into the design, and the church was completed without a dome. However, pilgrimages by the citizens of Nea Karvali to old Gelveri in the last decades have allowed a greater familiarity with the old church, and even the opportunity to celebrate Gregory’s feast day there on 25 January. Accordingly, a dome was deemed necessary in Nea Karvali, added in the late 1990s. That the Gelverioties continue to hold firmly to the association with the old church was highlighted by an incident that occurred in the 1980s. A new priest assigned to the parish, unfamiliar with local custom, attempted to move the relics into a new position in the north transept. This displacement was stopped by locals, and Gregory’s relics remain on the north side of the nave, exactly where he belongs, according to long tradition.

Just how long that tradition existed is unclear. In nineteenth-century Gelveri, Gregory’s relics lay on the north side of the nave. At Sivrihisar, the memorial space also lay on the north side of the nave, and it is tempting to

56 R. Ousterhout, ‘Flexible Geography and Transportable Topography’, *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art* (Jerusalem, 1998), pp. 393–404 (published as *Jewish Art* 23–24 [1997–98]).

57 Information from interviews with the older inhabitants of Nea Karvali conducted in 1986.

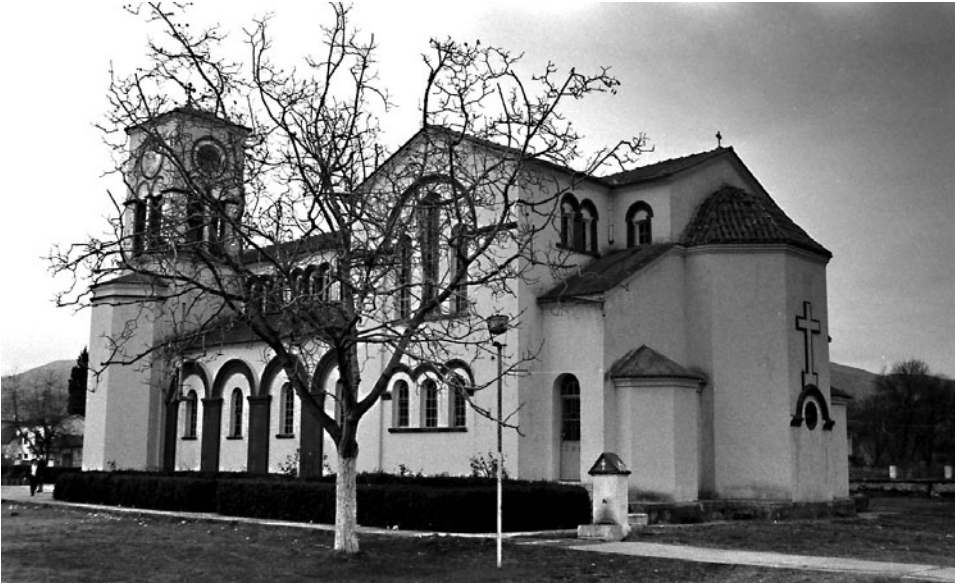


Fig. 10.4 Hagios Georgios seen from the southeast in 1986 before the addition of the dome, Nea Karvali, Macedonia, northern Greece (photo: author).

see a connection between the design and function of the two Cappadocian churches. All the same, there is no clear evidence of continuity of the Greek Orthodox population of Gelveri from Byzantine times through the Ottoman period. One wonders if the Greeks could have been resettled there sometime in the Ottoman period, only to create an imaginative prehistory (perhaps influenced by Western travelers), as apparently occurred at Viranşehir.

Gregory Moves On

This, in sum, is the local belief. Following his death c.389, Gregory was buried either at his estate in Arianzos or in Nazianzos itself. Oddly, for someone of Gregory's importance, the location of his burial seems to have gone unrecorded.⁵⁸ The only text I am aware of that is specific in this regard is the *Encomium* of Niketas the Paphlagonian, written in the early tenth century, which relates that he was buried in his father's mausoleum, his body covered by a single stone.⁵⁹ He

⁵⁸ Mossay, 'Nazianze', p. 442, leaves the locations of the tombs of Gregory and his family as open questions.

⁵⁹ *The Encomium of Gregory Nazianzen by Nicetas the Paphlagonian*, trans. and ed. J.J. Rizzo (Brussels, 1976), 28.50–55, pp. 77, 125.

must have died without anybody being aware, for none of his contemporaries seems to have composed an *Oration* on the occasion of his death.

Sometime around 950, Constantine VII had Gregory's relics 'returned' to Constantinople, for he viewed Gregory as his personal protector.⁶⁰ But it is unclear where exactly they were obtained. Constantine personally carried the silver reliquary into the capital and pronounced a panegyric upon their deposition in the church of the Holy Apostles.⁶¹ The relics – at least part of them – were enshrined inside the sanctuary of the church in an 'oblong rectangular sarcophagus of ruddy color', next to those of John Chrysostom.⁶² Part of them, however, may have been placed in the church of Hagia Anastasia, a church closely associated with Gregory, although Symeon Magister (after 963) provides our only account of this.⁶³ Russian pilgrims of the Palaiologan period noted the stone tombs at the Holy Apostles still in the same location, although they may have been empty by that time.⁶⁴ The relics – at least part of them – were apparently taken to Rome after 1204.⁶⁵ In Rome the relics of Gregory were situated in the church of Santa Maria in Campo Martio.⁶⁶ According to a vague local tradition, they had been brought to Rome during the Dark Ages by monks fleeing the advance of the Arabs, although a *furta sacra* following the sack of Constantinople in 1204 seems more likely. In 1578, Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85) had the relics transferred into the newly completed Basilica of Saint Peter's in the Vatican – the first relics to be brought in after those of Saint Peter himself.⁶⁷ They were subsequently enshrined in the Cappella Gregoriana in the gallery of the Basilica, and the transferral was commemorated by a series of topographical frescoes in the Terza Loggia.⁶⁸ The transferral was meant to encourage the unity

60 G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 218.

61 D. Flusin, 'L'empereur et le théologien, à propos du retour des reliques de Grégoire de Nazianze', in I. Ševčenko and I. Hutter (eds), *Studies in Honor of Cyril Mango* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 137–53; for the church: R. Janin, *La Géographie Ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin* (3 vols, 2nd ed. Paris, 1969), vol. 3.1, pp. 41–50.

62 G. Downey, 'Nikolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 47/6 (1957): pp. 890, 915 (38.4).

63 PG 109:817B; Symeon Magister is the only one to mention the relics in Hagia Anastasia. See also R. Snee, 'Gregory Nazianzen's Anastasia Church: Arianism, the Goths, and Hagiography', *DOP* 52 (1998): pp. 162–3; for the church, Janin, *La Géographie Ecclésiastique*, vol. 3.1, pp. 22–5 (no. 2).

64 G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 303; Ignatios also claims to have seen Gregory's head at the Peribleptos: *ibid.*, p. 279.

65 P. Riant, *Exuviae sacrae constantinopolitanae* (2 vols, Geneva, 1887), vol. 2, p. 295.

66 PG 35:238–9.

67 *Ibid.*, col. 239.

68 N. Courtright, *The Papacy and the Art of Reform in Sixteenth-Century Rome: Gregory XIII's Tower of the Winds in the Vatican* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 26 and *passim*.

of the Christian Church (under the leadership of Rome) and reflected Gregory XIII's hope for a closer relationship with the Orthodox Church.⁶⁹

A similar desire of ecumenical communality inspired the most recent transferral. In 2004, in order to heal the rift between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church, Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) returned the relics of Saint Gregory – at least part of them, along with those of Saint John Chrysostom, to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul.⁷⁰ They are now displayed in a marble *larnax* in the north aisle of the patriarchal church.

Veneration of Gregory in Cappadocia

A cursory examination of the painted churches of Cappadocia indicates that Gregory appears regularly with the Fathers of the Church in or near the main apse, as was standard in Byzantine church decoration.⁷¹ Because of their local origins and popularity, occasionally he and Basil of Caesarea were singled out, as for example at the early post-Iconoclastic church of Saint Basil near Sinassos, where the only figures represented amid the plethora of symbols and inscriptions are Basil and Gregory, flanking the apse.⁷² At the Doğan Yuvası Mevkiinde Kilise at Selime of the late tenth century, Gregory and, curiously, the Apostle Philip are given special placement on the intrados of the bema arch.⁷³ All the same, considerably fewer painted programs survive in Western Cappadocia – that is, the area close to Nazianzos – than in the Göreme region, which lies closer to Caesarea and the *martyrium* of Basil.

Outside of the standard representations of Gregory as Church Father, however, he appears rarely in church decoration. Occasionally in manuscripts of his sermons Gregory appears in an author portrait, resembling an Evangelist, as in the well-known Sinai Gregory.⁷⁴ More common are biographical scenes illustrating the autobiographical references in his sermons.⁷⁵ And while he

69 F. Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps: Art, Cartography and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, 2005), pp. 230–37; for the Gregorian Chapel: fig. 9.1; for the scenes of translation: figs 6.3 and 9.6.

70 http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/2004/documents/ns_lit_doc_20041127_index_en.html (accessed 22/09/09).

71 C. Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce: le programme iconographique de l'apside et de ses abords* (Paris, 1991), pp. 30, 35 and passim.

72 Ibid., p. 186.

73 Ibid., p. 333.

74 J. Anderson, 'The Illustration of Cod. Sinai. Gr. 339', *ArtB* 61 (1979), pp. 167–85, and fig. 3.

75 G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus* (Princeton, 1969).

will appear in the company of Basil, Nicholas of Myra, and John Chrysostom, icons or reliquaries devoted solely to Gregory are unknown.⁷⁶

Second Excursion to the Çanlı Kilise

During recent research at the Çanlı Kilise, a salvage excavation uncovered a tiny, double-sided icon, which is now displayed in the Aksaray Museum. It features on the obverse an unidentified metropolitan saint, whom I believe should be identified as Gregory, with Constantine and Helena holding the True Cross on the reverse (Figs 10.5 and 10.6).⁷⁷ A bit of background information is necessary here. In 1994 I began four seasons of survey of the Byzantine church and rock-cut settlement.⁷⁸ The study was formulated to record the Byzantine settlement in its entirety and to derive maximum results from a non-intrusive survey, but unfortunately our presence on site attracted illegal excavations. Immediately following our first season, looters discovered 'mummies' in the north narthex of the church, and this prompted the intervention of the Aksaray Museum. The museum conducted a salvage excavation in August 1994, which was summarily published in 1998.⁷⁹ Unfortunately I was not allowed to examine the archaeological materials from the excavation until 2004, after my book manuscript was in the process of publication, and these objects could only be included in an appendix to the study.⁸⁰

Prior to 1994, erosion had filled the north narthex 2 m. deep with dirt, and the mummies (which I have not studied) are most likely Christian burials from the late Ottoman period (perhaps eighteenth or nineteenth century), placed close to the surface. In clearing the area, however, the excavators discovered sixteen rock-cut tombs in the floor of the narthex. From their typology, many of these must date from the Byzantine period, perhaps between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. All but two Ottoman-period burials had been plundered, but the excavators were able to retrieve a variety

76 For an early fourteenth-century portable mosaic icon: Y. Piatnitsky, in H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium Faith and Power 1261–1557* (New York, 2004), pp. 225–7 and fig. 134.

77 Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, pp. 206–8.

78 R. Ousterhout, 'The 1994 Survey at Akhisar-Çanlı Kilise', *XIII. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (Ankara, 1996), pp. 165–80; *idem*, 'The 1995 Survey at Akhisar-Çanlı Kilise', *XIV Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (2 vols, Ankara, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 435–54; *idem*, 'The 1996 Survey at Akhisar-Çanlı Kilise', *XV. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (2 vols, Ankara, 1998), vol. 1, pp. 45–57; *idem*, 'The 1997 Survey at Akhisar-Çanlı Kilise', *XVI. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı* (2 vols, Ankara, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 49–59.

79 M. Endoğlu and D. Kaya, 'Aksaray Akhisar Köyü Çanlı Kilise Kurtarma Kazısı', *VIII. Müze Kurtarma Kazıları Semineri* (Ankara, 1998), pp. 585–606.

80 Ousterhout, *Byzantine Settlement*, pp. 202–8. I am grateful to the museum authorities for permission to study, photograph, and publish the icon.

of Byzantine objects from the churned earth. Although they probably came from burials, none was found *in situ*.

Among these was the icon in question. Partially broken, the surviving portion measures 13 x 7.5 cm and would have measured c.13 x 9 cm when complete, small enough to be easily held in the palm of a hand. The wooden panel is a mere 0.4 cm thick. It was broken into three pieces and repaired, once, not very recently, with drill-holes and cord. The upper border is ogival in shape, with a small finial at the top. There is no evidence of a frame. The icon's remarkable survival may be attributed to the dry climate of the region combined with its protected location in the vaulted north narthex.

On the obverse, the icon represents a metropolitan saint in liturgical garb, painted in a sophisticated style with rich colors. He stands on a green ground and is set against a fine gold background laid over a thin layer of gesso. Large areas of the right side and upper portion, including the top of the figure's head and left arm, are missing. Both arms were raised, either in a symmetrical orans pose, or with the right hand in a gesture of blessing and the left hand possibly holding a staff or a book. Indecipherable traces of the inscription, in red letters, are preserved on the upper left side.

The identity of the saint represented on the icon is uncertain. However, the short grey beard, rosy complexion, and lively eyes with black pupils suggest Saint Gregory the Theologian as a likely candidate.⁸¹ He compares favorably to the eleventh-century image of Gregory from the manuscript Dionysiou 61. Gregory came from nearby in Cappadocia, and his estates at Arianzos, his bishopric at Nazianzos, and (later) tomb in Gelveri were all close at hand (see map, Fig. 10.1).⁸²

The elaborate liturgical dress is distinctive. The figure wears a simple white *sticharion* decorated with black bands on the right side. Over this he wears a *sakkos*, ochre in color and decorated with green orbs with gold crosses on them, organized in three rows of six along the front of the robe. Darker brown linear crosses appear between these, and the lower and right borders of the robe are decorated with pearls. A small bit of the *epitrachelion* hangs from beneath the *sakkos*, and an *omophorion* decorated with crosses is worn over the shoulders and hangs down his front. As a liturgical garment, the *sakkos* does not appear before the mid-twelfth century, when it is worn exclusively

81 Dionysios of Fournas describes Gregory as 'an old man, bald with a wide smoke-like beard and straight eyebrows': P. Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fournas. An English Translation, with Commentary of God. gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad* (London, 1974), p. 54.

82 The figure compares favorably to representations of Gregory in eleventh-century manuscripts, such as Dionysiou 587m, fol. 143r and Dionysiou 61, fol. 172v, and elsewhere in his illustrated homilies: S.M. Pelekanides, P.C. Christou, Ch. Tsioumis, and S.N. Kathas (eds), *Treasures of Mount Athos: Illuminated Manuscripts* (Athens, 1973), vol. 1, pls 116, 258. See also Galavaris, *Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies*, passim.



Fig. 10.5 Icon from the Çanlı Kilise, obverse, Saint Gregory (?), late Byzantine period, Aksaray Museum, Cappadocia, Turkey (photo: author). See also colour Plate 1.



Fig. 10.6 Icon from the Çanlı Kilise, reverse, Saints Constantine and Helena holding the True Cross, late Byzantine period, Aksaray Museum, Cappadocia, Turkey (photo: author). See also colour Plate 2.

by metropolitans.⁸³ The artist clearly possessed both skill and sophistication, evident in the shading of the *omophorion*, the three-dimensional treatment of the drapery, and the details of the face. Both the liturgical dress and the ogival form of the icon argue for a Late Byzantine date, as both are uncommon before this period.

Later in this same period the representation of Saints Constantine and Helena holding the True Cross was added on the other side of the panel. For this the icon was turned upside down so that the ogive is at the bottom, thus giving the panel a shield-like shape. The colors are not as rich as on the obverse; the gold ground appears flatter, over a thinner layer of gesso. A thin band of gold frames the green ground. The upper portions of Constantine and the Cross are missing; part of Helena's face survives, but her entire left side is also missing. Nevertheless enough of the iconography is preserved to identify the subject.

Constantine wears a purple robe decorated with jeweled gold borders and stands on a red *hypopodion*, either barefoot or with nondescript footwear. His left foot in profile has a high arch, while his right foot is missing. The robe has ochre highlights. He gestures with his right hand and his sash is overturned as it presumably draped over his left arm, now missing. Helena is dressed in red and stands on a purple *hypopodion*. Her robe has jeweled gold borders and the red is highlighted in white. A small portion of her face is preserved, including a long thin nose and small mouth and right eye, all sensitively painted. Because her robe covers her feet and is thus longer than Constantine's, Helena appears to be taller than her son. The two saints holding the cross between them was a common scene in the painted churches of Cappadocia and elsewhere in the Byzantine world. The iconography is standard, except quite possibly for the perhaps bare feet of Constantine and the *hypopodia*.⁸⁴ Stylistically, a date in the Late Byzantine period seems most likely.

Considering the exceptionally small scale of the icon, the painters may have been trained as miniaturists or as manuscript illustrators. This scale, in combination with the findspot,⁸⁵ also encourages an identification of the icon as an object of personal devotion – perhaps worn as an *enkolpion*, suspended from a cord knotted to the finial and probably included in a burial.⁸⁶ Perhaps if worn hanging on the chest, the icon could be easily flipped by the wearer

83 A. Kazhdan, 'Sakkos', *ODB* vol. 3, p. 1830. In a fourteenth-century version of his Homilies, Gregory is depicted in identical garb addressing an assembly of bishops: Paris, Bib. Nat., Cod. Gr. 543, fol. 288v; Galavaris, *Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies*, fig. 467.

84 See K. Wessel, 'Konstantin und Helena' *RBK* 4 (Stuttgart, 1989), pp. 257–66; For Cappadocian examples, Açık Saray 1, Yusuf Koç Kilise, Göreme Çarıklı Kilise, Göreme Yılanlı Kilise, Göreme 21, Hermitage of Symeon, Soğanlı St. Barbara, Ayvalı Kilise, Göreme Tokalı Kilise: L. Rodley, *Cave monasteries of Byzantine Cappadocia* (Cambridge, 1985), passim.

85 See above, pp. 162–3.

86 Compare with the fifteenth-century icon depicting the Dormition of Saint Ephraim of Syria, in which the deceased has a small icon of the Man of Sorrows on his chest; illustrated in Evans (ed.), *Byzantium Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, p. 158 (no. 88).

for a proper viewing of the obverse. In any case, I know of no other bilateral icons with the reverse inverted from the obverse. Of course, the metropolitan saint on the obverse could also be identified as Nicholas – a metropolitan saint with similar features, but the findspot in Western Cappadocia encourages an association with Gregory.⁸⁷ In addition, the combination of images would parallel the two traditional dedications of the nearby church in Gelveri – to the Theologian and the Holy Cross.

Conclusion

To conclude, I return to the notion of the universalizing interpretation of Gregory proposed by Leslie Brubaker noted at the beginning of this paper. While finding no specificity, it may be Gregory's universality that is the message to be found in the Cappadocian landscape. Indeed, the saint's universal appeal led to the repeated translation and multiplication of his relics, as well as their employment to diplomatic ends. It also led Western scholars to explore the wilds of central Anatolia in search of Gregory, often to inconclusive or contradictory results. If we review the image with which I began, fol. 542r from the Paris Gregory, in this context, we may posit a few answers to the questions it poses. Where is Gregory going in the ship? Into the world. Where is his consecration? In the universal church. Where was he buried? Well, we still don't know. While continued explorations in Cappadocia may turn up additional traces of veneration and may firm up our knowledge of Gregorian geography, it is perhaps all too appropriate for a saint of such universal appeal as Gregory that his tomb, his authentic relics, and even his Cappadocian haunts remain elusive.

⁸⁷ Dionysios of Fourna describes him as 'an old man, bald, with a rounded beard': Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual'*, p. 54.

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Colour Plates



Plate 1 Icon from the Çanlı Kilise, obverse, Saint Gregory (?), late Byzantine period, Aksaray Museum, Cappadocia, Turkey (photo: author).



Plate 2 Icon from the Çanlı Kilise, reverse, Saints Constantine and Helena holding the True Cross, late Byzantine period, Aksaray Museum, Cappadocia, Turkey (photo: author).

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New Visions of Old Meanings: Paris. gr. 135 and Some Anti-Latin Visual Implications

Kallirroë Linardou

The Book of Job, a didactic poem of the Septuagint with narrative sections entwined with lengthy philosophical dialogues and reflections on punishment and vindication, enjoyed much popularity during the Middle Ages in Byzantium as well as in the West.¹ Its protagonist, Job, came to acquire a proverbial reputation for patience and unconditional piety. Having suffered numerous trials and tortures at the hands of Satan, he was eventually restored and rewarded by God for his righteousness with a lavish bestowal of material goods and personal prosperity.

Although recitation from the Book of Job at Church and the liturgy was rare in Byzantium,² no less than 15 illustrated manuscripts of this Book have come down to us, covering a time span from the ninth to the sixteenth

1 For Byzantium generally: K. Wessel, 'Hiob', in *RBK* vol. 3, cols 131–52; P. Huber, *Hiob. Dulder oder Rebell? Byzantinische Miniaturen zum Buch Hiob in Patmos, Rom, Venedig, Sinai, Jerusalem und Athos* (Düsseldorf, 1986); M. Bernabò, *Le miniature per i manoscritti greci del libro di Giobbe. Patmo, Monastero di San Giovanni Evangelista, cod. 171; Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. Gr. 749; Sinai, Monastero di Santa Caterina, cod. 3; Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Gr. 538* (Florence, 2004); S. Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job: A Preliminary Study of the Miniature Illustrations. Its Origin and Development* (Athens, 2009). For the West: L.L. Besserman, *The Legend of Job in the Middle Ages* (London, 1979); S. Terrien, *The Iconography of Job Through the Centuries. Artists as Biblical Interpreters* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

2 G. Høeg and G. Zuntz (eds), *Prophetologium. Lectiones ab Ascensione usque ad Dominicam Omnium Sanctorum. Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae Lectionaria* (Hauniae, 1970), vol. I.6, pp. 602–3; G. Engberg (ed.), *Prophetologium, Pars altera, Lectiones anni immobilis. Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae Lectionaria* (Hauniae, 1980), vol. I.1, pp. 168–9. Interestingly, the lessons from the Book of Job selected to be read in the Orthodox Church derive exclusively from the prologue and the epilogue, that is from these parts of the text that normally accommodated illustration.

centuries.³ The content of the biblical text itself, with the dramatic reversals of Job's fortune and the edifying character of the dialogues, held an appeal for the medieval reader, while the pictures visualized the sufferings of the pious protagonist and complemented the textual narration in a most vivid manner.

Poetic texts such as the Book of Job, with their reflective character and philosophical overtones, did not offer themselves easily to illustration. The various verbal allusions and similes were hard to translate into pictures. The earliest Byzantine manuscripts of the Book of Job with cyclic illustration contain only pictures for the prologue (Job, 1–2) and the epilogue (Job, 38–42), in other words for the narrative sections of the biblical text.⁴ The content of the philosophical dialogues in-between posed several obstacles to the miniaturists. For this reason, and on average at the beginning of each chapter, the text of the dialogues was punctuated by repetitive visual reminders of the participants and their physical setting,⁵ in the form of almost identical miniatures depicting Job seated on a dunghill conversing with his friends.

Amongst the surviving illustrated codices of the Book of Job we can single out a group of nine bearing an unusually extensive cycle of miniatures.⁶ These manuscripts, which seem to proliferate in the middle Byzantine period, especially from the twelfth century onwards, depart from the existing cycle and go on to illustrate the complicated dialogic section of the text, thus providing us with a much more 'voluble' visual narration that in some cases approximates or surpasses the 200 miniatures.⁷

This paper will discuss two Greek illustrated manuscripts of Job created almost two centuries apart, and further touch upon issues concerning their iconographical affinity and their mode of visual narration. They both belong to the group of illustrated manuscripts of Job bearing an extensive cycle of

3 See the detailed catalogue of all surviving Byzantine illustrated Books of Job in Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, pp. 323–412; Bernabò, *Le miniature per i manoscritti greci del libro di Giobbe*, pp. 9–11; G. Galavaris, M. Konstantinou, C.J. Belezos, E. Papa, Priest-Monk E. Vittis, *Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery Codex Graecus 3. The Book of Job, Facsimile edition* (Athens, 2002), pp. 20–21.

4 Bernabò, *Le miniature per i manoscritti greci del libro di Giobbe*, pp. 15–19, where also illustration. Moreover, see the review of the aforementioned monograph by K. Krause in *BZ* 99/1 (2006): pp. 223–30 and by V. Tsamakda in *JÖB* 57 (2007): 425–9. Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, pp. 36–161 with ample illustration.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

6 Vatican, BAV, cod. Palat. gr. 230 (eleventh to twelfth century, 152 miniatures); Vatican, BAV, cod. gr. 1231 (first quarter of the twelfth century, 149 miniatures); Athens, Byzantine and Christian Museum, cod. gr. 164 (formerly 62) (end of the twelfth century, 154 miniatures); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 201 (twelfth century, 234 miniatures); Vatican, BAV, cod. gr. 751 (end of the twelfth–beginning of the thirteenth century, 227 miniatures); Jerusalem, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, cod. Tafou 5 (c.1300, 116 miniatures); Paris, BNF, cod. gr. 134 (beginning of the fourteenth century, 176 miniatures); Paris, BNF, cod. gr. 135 (1362, 198 miniatures) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud gr. 86 (sixteenth century, 204 miniatures).

7 Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, pp. 204–44 and Appendix II.

illustration, and they are dated to the fourteenth and to the middle of the sixteenth century respectively.

A prolific scribe of the fourteenth century named Manuel Tzykandelis, evidently active in Thessaloniki, Epibatai of Selymbria, Constantinople and Mystras,⁸ copied the Book of Job and its lengthy catenae in a paper codex, Paris. gr. 135, today housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁹ According to the colophon preserved on fol. 247v,¹⁰ his task was completed in 1362. The place where Manuel undertook the commission is not mentioned explicitly and as a result it has been widely assumed that the manuscript was copied in Mystras,¹¹ where Tzykandelis moved in 1362 and resided for another ten years, until 1372.

Tzykandelis' manuscript was then illustrated with an extensive cycle of 198 miniatures inserted without frame in the text and always in close proximity to the biblical extract they visually translate. Their size and position varies and they always occupy the spaces left free by the scribe deliberately for this purpose. The study of the page layout as well as the positioning of the miniatures reveals an extremely complex and meticulous design that suggests a close co-operation of the scribe and the miniaturist. Whether Manuel Tzykandelis – the prolific calligrapher/scribe – was the illuminator as well

8 PLP vol. 11, pp. 242–3 (entry 28129).

9 T. Velmans, 'Le Parisinus grecus 135 et quelques autres peintures de style gothique dans les manuscrits grecs à l'époque des paléologues', *CahArch* 17 (1967): pp. 209–35; H.C. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New York and London, 2004), p. 63 (no. 33) (with references to earlier catalogue entries). See also J.M. Andrews, 'Familiar foreigners: Artistic innovations in a fourteenth-century illustrated commentary on Job', *Arte Medievale*, II Serie, Anno XIV, nn. 1–2 (2000): pp. 113–21; *eadem*, 'Imagery in the aftermath of the Crusades: A Fourteenth-Century Illustrated Commentary on Job (Paris, BN graecus 135)' (University of California, 2002) (unpublished Ph.D dissertation) – I would like to thank Prof. Olga Gratsiou for drawing my attention to this thesis; C. Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène? Étude historique d'un livre de Job du VIVE siècle', *Byzantium* 78 (2008): pp. 404–80; Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, pp. 401–4.

10 H. Omont, *Fac-similés des manuscrits grecs datés de la Bibliothèque nationale du IXe–XIV siècle* (Paris, 1891), p. 18, pl. XCIII; I. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* (Leiden, 1981), p. 65 (no. 264); R. Etzeoglou, '«Εγράφη ἐν τῷ Μυστρίᾳ»', *Βιβλιογραφικές δραστηριότητες στον Μυστρά κατά τον 13^ο και τον 14^ο αιώνα*, *DChAE* 4, 26 (2005): pp. 181–92 (esp. pp. 189–90) (with an English abstract); Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, p. 401. A picture of the folio bearing the colophon is accessible at <http://mandragore.bnf.fr>.

11 M. Theochari, 'Ἐνα Βυζαντινὸ χερσόγραφο τοῦ Μυστρά', in *Νέες Μορφές, Μάρτιος-Απρίλιος* 1962: pp. 25–8; Velmans, 'Le Parisinus grecus 135', p. 210; Evans, *Byzantium. Faith and Power*, p. 63 (no. 33); Andrews, 'Familiar foreigners', p. 113, locate the commissioning of the manuscript in Mystras. Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène?', pp. 407 and 415, is more cautious with her attribution for the production of the manuscript and initially proposes either Constantinople or the Peloponnese. Yet, further below (p. 415) she concurs with the widespread opinion and favours Mystras. For a new proposition: Etzeoglou, 'Βιβλιογραφικές Δραστηριότητες', pp. 189–90.

or not is still to be proved.¹² Each illuminated folio has a different lay-out with the pictures always appearing adjacent to the lines of the biblical text, as by rule they are all reliant to its content. However, we can not exclude the possibility that some iconographical details in the pictures might have been inspired by the catenae surrounding the text.¹³

The most intriguing part of the illustration cycle belongs with the section of the dialogues, the part of the biblical text that poses serious challenges to its visual translation. How is someone supposed to illustrate abstract philosophical thoughts, allusions, metaphors and similes? The solution that Tzykandelis and his illustrator came up with was succesful in having the miniatures visualize literally, lucidly and with astonishing inventiveness and imagination the mental pictures introduced by the metaphors and the similes of the text.

The significance of this particular manuscript does not necessarily lie in the artistic merit of its paintings but rather in the 'volubility' of the visual narration and its iconographical and stylistic peculiarities. Historians of Byzantine Art have long acknowledged the gothic infiltrations in both its iconography and style.¹⁴ The Tzykandelis illustrated Job defies easy classification; it combines a biblical story with a long tradition of illustration in Byzantium with conspicuous influences of western contemporary art. This mingling of Byzantine tradition with western stylistic currents on Byzantine soil raises many questions with regard to the commission, production and audience of the specific manuscript. Was Manuel Tzykandelis the illuminator as well, or did he co-operate with a miniaturist of either western or byzantine origin?¹⁵

12 See the discussion above and note 15.

13 One such case can be found on fol. 46v: a miniature representing the Descend to Hades illustrates verse Job 3.8. On the sixth line of the commentary continuing beneath the biblical text of the same folio we read: ὃν πολλαχοῦ ἡ θεία γραφή, δράκοντα ὀνομάζει, 'whom [referring to the sneak] the holy scripture names as dragon in various instances'. In the picture and where we normally expect to see a personification of Hades in accordance with the Byzantine iconographical formula of the scene, rests a dragon, obviously inspired by the content of the *scholio* that is in visual contact with the miniature. For a similar rendering of Hades in other byzantine manuscripts of Job: S. Papadaki-Oekland, 'Ο κώδικας 590 της Μονῆς Βατοπεδίου. Ένα αντίγραφο του Ιώβ της Πάτμου', *DChAE* 4, 13 (1985/86): pp. 17–38 (esp. p. 31, fig. 40); *eadem*, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, pp. 275–6. For a different interpretation of this iconographical detail that totally disregards the connection of the image with its accompanying text: Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène', p. 444.

14 Velmans, 'Le Parisinus grecus 135', pp. 209–35 (esp. pp. 231–3), and recently Andrews, 'Familiar foreigners', pp. 116–20; *eadem*, 'Imagery in the aftermath of the Crusades', pp. 19–45.

15 Velmans, 'Le Parisinus grecus 135', p. 232, favours the hypothesis of a Greek miniaturist working with western models; H. Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg, 1970), pp. 16–17, proposed that the illustration of the manuscript should be ascribed to the calligrapher/scribe Tzykandelis himself; I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturen handschriften, Band 3.1: Oxford Bodleian Library III* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 251–3, dismisses the hypothesis of Belting and supports the idea of a western miniaturist working at Mystras. See also Etzeoglou, 'Βιβλιογραφικέ

Who would be interested in owning a Greek manuscript containing images executed in a manner apparently alien to Byzantine mentality? Was the manuscript intended for Byzantine eyes? All these are tantalizing questions begging for an answer, yet the manuscript itself does not provide us with straightforward clues.

A recent publication on the Paris Job attempts to articulate a complex hypothesis in order to provide some answers to the aforementioned questions.¹⁶ Caroline Alcalay proposes that the book copied by Tzykandelis was illuminated by a western miniaturist and was commissioned by a member of the papal entourage to the Byzantine East, or by someone from within the latinophile circles of Byzantium, in order to be presented as a gift to John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–54),¹⁷ a former emperor residing in Mystras during those years. According to the same article, the indiosyncratic character of the illustration with its striking gothic elements was inspired by the New Theology of Thomas Aquinas (c.1225–74).

The Bodleian Library at Oxford houses another Greek illustrated paper codex from the middle of the sixteenth century, Laud gr. 86, which also contains the Book of Job with catenae.¹⁸ In all probability it was produced in Venice.¹⁹ This codex, too, contains an extensive cycle of 204 miniatures that enliven the biblical story chapter by chapter. A large part of them, though, remained unfinished and left as sketches. Every picture is set within a frame and interrupts the text, which is written in a single column that combines the biblical extract with the catenae (Textkatenen). The miniatures are executed appealingly in watercolour and in accordance with the achievements of the masters of the Italian Renaissance. Yet, what makes this particular manuscript extremely interesting in the context of this paper is its outstanding iconographical affinity with the illustrated Job in Paris. Despite the differences in the page layout, a detailed comparison of the two manuscripts proves beyond any doubt that the relationship between the two manuscripts cannot but be described as that of model-copy.²⁰ Beyond the iconographical similarities they share, and as

Δραστηριότητες', p. 189 and note 54; O. Gratsiou, *Αναμνήσεις από τη χαμένη βασιλεία. Σελίδες εικονογραφημένης χρονογραφίας του 17^{ου} αιώνα* (Athens, 1996), pp. 87–8 and notes 9, 11. Finally, Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène?', p. 463, favours the idea of a western miniaturist originating from the latin circles of Lusignian Cyprus.

16 Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène?', pp. 404–74.

17 A-M. Talbot, 'John VI Kantakouzenos', ODB vol.2, pp. 1050–51.

18 I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften, Band 2. Oxford Bodleian Library II* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 54–66 (no. 4); Gratsiou, *Αναμνήσεις από τη χαμένη βασιλεία*, pp. 166–7 and 172–4, fig. 101.

19 Hutter, *Corpus, Band II*, p. 54; Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène?', p. 406, note 10.

20 The first scholar to notice and comment on the similarity of the two manuscripts was Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, p. 405. Andrews, 'Imagery in the aftermath of the Crusades', pp. 171–2, mentions this in her unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Finally, Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène?',

far as we have been able to establish, the framed miniatures of the Bodleian manuscript interrupt the text at the exact same points as the pictures in the Paris Job. Again, aspects relating to the intended audience of this manuscript remain puzzling.

Despite the two centuries separating them, both codices under discussion provide us with new visions, a fresh look into a popular biblical narrative, while accommodating nearly identical iconographical cycles, conceptually rooted in Byzantine visual narration modes as exemplified in the group of Byzantine illustrated Job manuscripts with extensive illustration.²¹ In what follows we will examine a series of miniatures from both manuscripts illustrating the section of the dialogues, the iconography of which presents the reader/viewer with remarkable discrepancies, the interpretation of which may shed light on the circumstances in which both manuscripts were committed.

On fol. 105r of Paris. gr. 135, a miniature situated on the lower part of the page illustrates verses 12:18–19 (Fig. 11.1) and it is in physical contact with the extract of the biblical text it enlivens. Job elaborates on God's omnipotence and wisdom:

He seats kings upon thrones, and girds their loins with a girdle. He sends away priests into captivity, and overthrows the mighty ones of the earth.

In the picture, the ruler that governs with God's blessings sits frontally on a backless throne, while a bust of Christ from heaven acknowledges his earthly power. It is essential to note that except for the three friends of Job that are traditionally represented as kings arriving on horseback to support the ill-treated Job,²² in the context of Paris. gr. 135 the king of this particular miniature is singled out as the only royal figure presented positively, that is ruling under God's blessings, and most significantly he is the only one conspicuously vested with the *loros* of the Byzantine emperors, despite the western crown. In every other case where royal figures are shown in the illustrations, except for Job himself, they are depicted unambiguously as western rulers within a

p. 406 and note 10, provides more evidence on the matter and she substantiates the organic relationship between the two manuscripts: restoration works evident on several paper folios of Paris. Gr. 135 were undertaken during the sixteenth century in Venice and in the scriptorium of Andreas Darmarios and Nicholaos Choniatis where also the Bodleian manuscript was eventually copied.

21 The illustration of the story of Job in western medieval manuscripts is limited to a single or a few miniatures within books of various textual contexts: Bernabò, *Le miniature per i manoscritti greci del libro di Giobbe*, p. 8 and notes 19–24; Besserman, *The Legend of Job in the Middle Ages*, figs 1–18. No western medieval manuscript has survived to compare with the extend, detail and completeness of the Byzantine visual Job-narratives, at least to my knowledge.

22 Bernabò, *Le miniature per i manoscritti greci del libro di Giobbe*, pp. 75–8, figs 86–90.

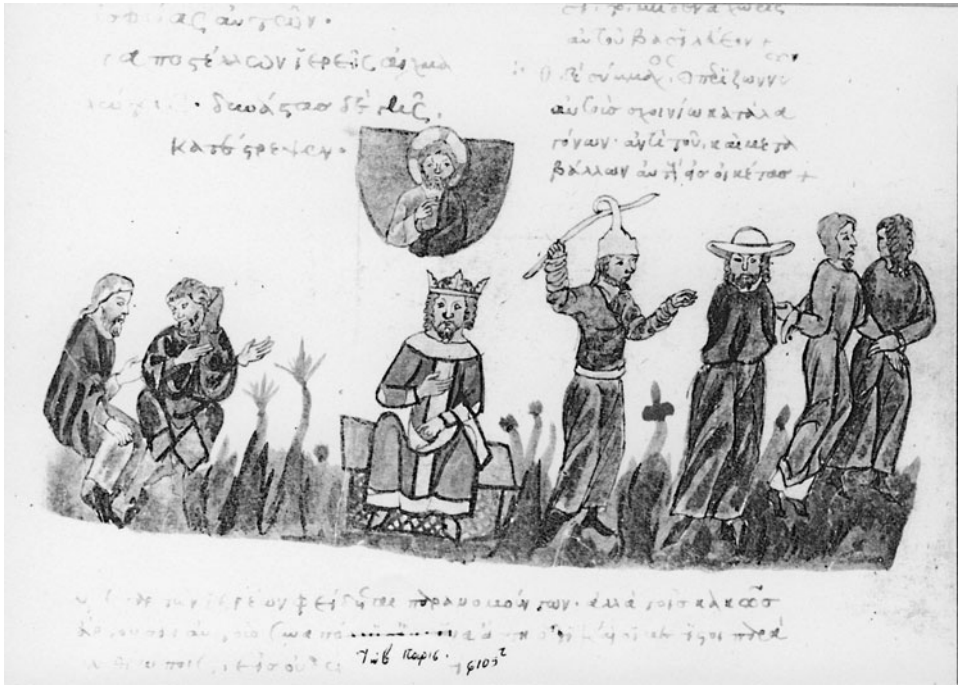


Fig. 11.1 Miniature illustrating Job 12:18–19, fourteenth century, Paris. gr. 135, fol. 105r, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (used with the permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

negative textual context.²³ They all represent impious tyrants deserving of the punishments that have been meted out to them.

On the right of the miniature a standing soldier holding a stick sends away three male figures representing the captives of the biblical text. The first among them, standing frontally and staring directly at the viewer as the enthroned king does, is obviously a representative of the clergy. However, what is most interesting is the fact that he is clothed as a Latin cleric, with a *cappello romano* and a purple cassock.²⁴ He represents the priests mentioned in the biblical text that were sent into captivity by the will of God. The miniature literally translates the content of the biblical text. The rhetoric of the picture, however,

23 Paris. gr. 135, fols 48v, 120r, 121v, 174r and 210r. The entire illustration of the manuscript is accessible at <http://mandragore.bnf.fr>.

24 The outfit of the Latin cleric in our miniature is comparable with an almost contemporary work by Tommaso da Modena of c.1351–52, representing Cardinal Nicholas of Rouen in the fresco cycle of Chapterhouse, Treviso: M. Camille, *Gothic Art. Glorious Visions* (London, 1996), pp. 148–9, fig. 108. See also the panel painting of Master Theoderic dated to 1360–65 representing Saint Jerome as cardinal, today at National Gallery, Prague. A good reproduction of this painting is accessible at www.wga.hu.



Fig. 11.2 Miniature illustrating Job 12:18–19, mid-sixteenth century, Laud gr. 86, page 166, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (used with the permission of the Bodleian Library).

and more specifically the telling distinction between the good ruler and the bad priest, dictates a culturally predisposed viewing of good rulership and bad priesthood. The king of the text is represented as a royal figure wearing the byzantine *loros*, while the ‘priest sent into captivity’ is a Latin ecclesiastic.

In the Bodleian manuscript on page 166 the same biblical extract was illustrated in a totally different manner (Fig. 11.2).²⁵ The king has been moved to the far left of the picture, while by his side, a group of seated seniors, rendered as aged sages, is sanctioned by the blessing bust of Christ and thus it has been unmistakably designated as privileged and not at risk. On the right, two male figures violently lead away a group of captives who cannot be identified clearly as members of the clergy. Their muscular torsos and the type

²⁵ Hutter, *Corpus*, Band II, p. 58, fig. 420.



Fig. 11.3 Miniature illustrating Job 28:7–8, fourteenth century, Paris. gr. 135, fol. 177r, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (used with the permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

of hat they wear – invariably employed in the illustration of this particular manuscript to indicate laymen²⁶ – make it rather improbable that these captives are priests. Therefore, the readily observable distinction between the Byzantine-looking ruler and the Latin cleric in the fourteenth-century codex has been deliberately changed in the sixteenth-century manuscript.

A similar visual association that demonstrates a negative predisposal towards Latin clergy can be found in the miniature on fol. 177r (Fig. 11.3) of the Paris Job, which illustrates verses 28:7–8. In the text, related to the picture, we find Job once again exemplifying the destiny of the impious and contemplating the concept of wisdom:

There is a path [the path of wisdom], the fowl has not known it,
neither has the eye of the vulture seen it; neither have the sons of
the impostors trodden it, a lion has not passed upon it.

²⁶ See for example Laud gr. 86, pp. 258, 271, 315, 344: Hutter, *Corpus*, Band II, pp. 61–3 and figs 459, 463, 478 and 488.

Again, the biblical text is rendered literally into pictures with the animals mentioned in it arranged in a row. It is interesting to note, though, that for no obvious reason that the biblical text could support or justify, 'the sons of the impostors', namely a negatively charged characterization, are personified in the figure of a high-ranking Latin cleric, vested in scarlet and bearing a characteristic head-gear (a biretta?) who gestures with his right hand towards the birds depicted beside him. In the corresponding miniature on page 296 of the Bodleian codex, the same figure is represented plainly as a layman with an uncomplicated black cap.²⁷

Finally, in chapter 20, Sophar the Minaean elaborates on the gloomy destiny of the impious and recounts in disturbing details the tormenting punishments that would be meted out to both him personally and his assets.²⁸ In verses 15–17 Sophar refers explicitly to the treasures of the impious:

His wealth unjustly collected shall be vomited up; a messenger
of wrath shall drag him out of his house.
And let him suck the poison of the serpents, and let the serpent's tongue slay him.
Let him not see the milk of the pastures, nor the supplies of honey and butter.

All three verses were illustrated most realistically in the Paris codex; yet here we will focus on verse 17 and the miniature on fol. 145r (Fig. 11.4), which represents the rural activities related to the production of butter and honey, namely milking and bee-breeding. At first glance, the picture being in visual contact with the biblical extract it illustrates, does not seem to convey any anti-Latin sentiments and merely to conform to the general principle that underlies the illustration cycle of the manuscript. A couple, a woman and a man are milking a cow and a sheep, respectively, while three bee-hives on the right complete the picture. At a closer inspection, though, we realize that the selection of the animals depicted is not dependent on the content of the adjacent biblical extract. Therein, neither sheep nor cows are mentioned in specific, but instead 'pastures' (βομᾶδων) in general.

At this point it is essential to emphasize that no other Byzantine illuminated manuscript of Job, dated earlier than Paris. gr. 135, illustrates specifically this particular verse of the biblical text.²⁹ Ilias Anagnostakis and Titos Papamastorakis, who were the first to notice the peculiarities of the

27 Hutter, *Corpus*, Band II, p. 62, fig. 474.

28 This miniature is also discussed in K. Linardou, 'Notes on a milking scene in Paris. gr. 135', in Ilias Anagnostakis (ed.), *Ζώα και Περιβάλλον στο Βυζάντιο (7^{ος} αιώνας κ.ε.)* (Athens, forthcoming 2011).

29 Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, Appendix II, Table IV. The twelfth-century Athenensis codex gr. 164 (formerly known as no. 62) kept in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, was planned to be illustrated with 154 miniatures, which were never finished. Today we only see the framed areas intended to accommodate illustration. Hence, since on fol. 179r the miniature planned to illustrate verses 20:17–1 was never executed, we cannot substantiate either what kind of illustration it would have eventually appeared on



Fig. 11.4 Miniature illustrating Job 20:17, fourteenth century, Paris. gr. 135, fol. 145v, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (used with the permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

specific miniature, remark that the Paris Job milking scene of a cow remains exceptionally unique in Byzantine art and seems to contradict the Byzantine written and visual records that predominantly relate cows and oxen to heavy rural activities such as tillage, threshing and transportation.³⁰ No other Byzantine visual example has survived to depict the milking of a cow either by a man or a woman, at least to my knowledge. Yet, what is even more interesting and puzzling about our image is the exceptional depiction of a woman as a dairymaid. In Byzantine visual records the milking of animals is represented

this particular folio or which of the two verses of the biblical text would have been chosen for illustration: Papadaki-Oekland, *Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts of the Book of Job*, pp. 378–80.

30 I. Anagnostakis and T. Papamastorakis, 'Αγραιολύντες και αμέλγοντες', in *Η Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Γάλακτος και των Προϊόντων του. Ι΄ Τριήμερο Εργασίας, Ξάνθη, 7–9 Οκτωβρίου 2005* (Athens, 2008), pp. 211–37 (esp. pp. 217–21) and figs 17–20.

as an exclusively male activity.³¹ The comparison of the Paris miniature with the corresponding miniature on page 237 of the Bodleian codex (Fig. 11.5) is especially illuminating.³² The iconography of this later miniature has been substantially modified compared to its model and adapted to represent the milking of both cows and sheep exclusively by men.

This lack of visual evidence on the matter might not have been accidental; on the contrary, it may reflect the Byzantine reality. A popular legend transmitted to us by Michael Choniatis as well as contemporary anthropological evidence from nomadic populations of the Balkan peninsula corroborate the assumption that the milking of animals by women in Byzantium was an ambiguous activity subjected to a series of restrictions and prerequisites, almost a taboo, and as the Byzantine legend suggests, an act that made Byzantine women impure and resulted in their severe punishment by both God and men.³³

This culturally defined prohibition, however, was by no means universal. It certainly did not apply to the West where milking animals by women was a common place.³⁴ In the eyes of a westerner this particular representation would constitute a familiar daily activity and therefore a literal transmission of the text. In the eyes of a Byzantine, by contrast, the milking of a cow was indeed rare and most importantly the woman who milks the cow transgresses, she violates the unwritten law and becomes herself impure.

The interpretation of such an image is intertwined with questions relating to the manuscript's commission, production and intended audience. Why was this verse selected for illustration? What kind of visual resources did the miniaturist have at his disposal? Which culturally defined code of practice will help us decipher the meaning of the miniature in its given context?

On the one hand, the absence of this milking scene from all surviving Byzantine illustrated manuscripts of Job suggests that the inclusion of this particular miniature in the Paris Job and its rendering as such was an *ad hoc* solution meant to serve a very specific purpose. If we take under consideration the lack of Byzantine visual material on the matter, it is almost certain that the miniaturist used western pictorial models in order to compose his picture.

31 See for example the illustrated liturgical homilies of Gregory of Nazianzos: G. Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1969), figs 5, 104, 381, as well as the examples illustrated in Anagnostakis and Papamastorakis, 'Αγραιοούντες και αμέλγοντες', figs 13, 15, 23, 24, 25 and 26.

32 Hutter, *Corpus*, Band II, p. 60, fig. 445.

33 Anagnostakis and Papamastorakis, 'Αγραιοούντες και αμέλγοντες', p. 223, note 29 and fig. 21; A. Bryer, 'The means of agricultural production: muscle and tools', in A. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (2 vols, Washington, D.C., 2002), vol. 1, pp. 101–13 (esp. p. 104, note 9).

34 See for example the representation of a dairymaid milking a cow, from a bestiary of c.1240–50, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 764, fol. 41v, in C.M. Woolgar, 'Meat and Dairy products in Late Medieval England', C.M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson and T. Waldron (eds), *Food in Medieval England. Diet and Nutrition* (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 88–101 (especially pl. 7.1 on p. 95).



Fig. 11.5 Miniature illustrating Job 20:17, mid-sixteenth century, Laud gr. 86, page 237, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (used with the permission of the Bodleian Library).

This would explain the appearance of a cow in a milking scene as well as the depiction of the dairymaid.

On the other hand, the textual context within which the picture is situated is charged negatively with disturbing mental pictures of destruction, reminiscent of a curse invocation. It concerns the destiny and the ultimate punishment of the impious, and therefore seems to support the negative, Byzantine 'reading', of the milking woman. Such an interpretation promotes the hypothesis that this particular icographical detail in the miniature was deliberately employed by a Byzantine in a very specific textual context and it was meant as a negative visual comment and subtle insinuation against the impure customs and habits of the Latins that eventually will be punished. Although only a Latin could have been able to identify with the content of such imagery, the mastermind that decided the inclusion of this particular miniature in this specific context

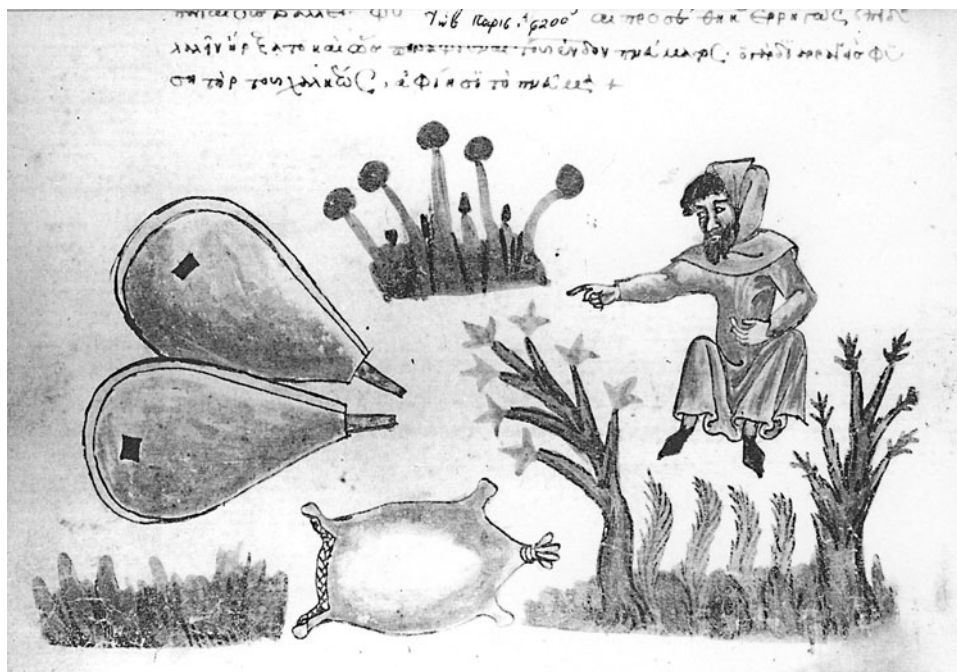


Fig. 11.6 Miniature illustrating Job 32:19, fourteenth century, Paris. gr. 135, fol. 200v, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (used with the permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

must have been a Byzantine and therein he managed to convey ingeniously, albeit in disguise, the frictions caused by the encounters of two distinctively different cultural identities on Byzantine soil.

In the three examples we examined, the Paris Job provides an ambiguous picture of the Latins and their customs. This was by no means an open polemic but instead a very subtle, yet negative appraisal. As a result, Alcalay's hypothesis that the book was conceived in the environment of the papal expedition to the East or in pro-Latin Byzantine circles,³⁵ seems highly implausible.

The Tzykandelis Job in Paris remains an intriguing and exceptional artefact with multifaceted problems that still challenge the modern scholar. The study of the book's layout and more specifically the relationship of the miniatures with the accompanying text on every illustrated folio indicates that Tzykandelis co-operated closely with an illustrator, either a Byzantine artist working from western models or a western one residing in Byzantium. Despite the obvious western influences in both iconography and style throughout the manuscript, the anti-Latin visual agenda of certain images suggests that the mastermind behind the project was also a Byzantine. Finally, the fact that all anti-Latin

35 Alcalay, 'Le Parisinus Graecus 135: Un hommage à Jean Cantacuzène?', pp. 449–70.

visual associations are cautious and subtle, may suggest that the ultimate recipient of the work was of Latin origin educated in Greek. This puzzling book would then have been virtually 'a wolf in sheep's clothing'.

As for the Oxford codex and its iconographical modifications and alterations, whether it was intended for a westerner educated in Greek or for a Greek in exile living within the Greek community of Venice, the visual insinuations of the Paris codex most probably appeared out of date almost two centuries later. Under the directions of the Greek scribe the western miniaturist 'corrected' deliberately some miniatures and adapted their iconography to the unbiased representation of the facts as recorded in the biblical text. These changes and adaptations were not incidental or inadvertent. In cases where such unintended modifications in iconography occurred, there is concrete evidence that the scribe intervened in order to correct the miniaturist and restore the right iconography, as we shall see in our last example.

On fol. 200v of the Paris codex (Fig. 11.6), illustrating verse 32:19, Elius, the fourth friend of Job that appears mysteriously towards the end of the dialogues, continues his speech in order to express his fury, provoked by what he has heard spoken of so far:

And my belly is as a skin of sweet wine bound up and ready
to burst; or as a brazier's labouring bellows.

On page 342 of the Oxford codex (Fig. 11.7) the corresponding miniature represents erroneously Job instead of Elius, standing and pointing towards the leather wine sacks and the bellows. The mistake did not escape the attention of the scribe, who added a corrective inscription to the miniature: 'Here, it is not Job who is angered but Elius, [represented as] seated and pointing towards the wineskins.'³⁶ What the scribe of the sixteenth century describes here is his model, namely the miniature in the fourteenth-century Paris Job, where Elius is shown as seated and pointing towards the skins.

In conclusion and as Leslie Brubaker has beautifully demonstrated throughout her work on Byzantine illuminated manuscripts, 'words give resonance to the images, and the images nuance the words'.³⁷ It is the images's distinctive discourse that in some cases provides the old meanings with entirely new visions.

³⁶ For the transcription: Hutter, *Corpus*, Band II, p. 63.

³⁷ L. Brubaker, 'Every cliché in the book. The linguistic turn and the text-image discourse in Byzantine manuscripts', in L. James (ed.), *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58–82 (quote on p. 58).



Fig. 11.7 Miniature illustrating Job 32:19, mid-sixteenth century, Laud gr. 86, page 342, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (used with the permission of the Bodleian Library).

The *Noli Me Tangere* Icon at the British Museum: Vision, Message and Reality¹

Angeliki Lymberopoulou, Lynne Harrison and Janet Ambers

Iconographical Observations

The unpublished icon depicting the *Noli Me Tangere* (BM 1994,0501.3) at the British Museum (Figs 12.1a and 12.1b),² is known in the bibliography of post-Byzantine Cretan studies because of its close similarity to the one at the Saint Catherine's Monastery at Herakleion,³ signed by the famous Cretan painter of the second half of the sixteenth century, Michael Damaskinos (Fig. 12.2). The differences between the two icons are minor, the most important being their size: measuring approximately 62 x 47 cm the British Museum icon is substantially smaller than the one in Herakleion (109 x 87 cm). Damaskinos' signature verifies the Cretan roots of the icon at the Saint Catherine's monastery. For the work kept at the British Museum, such roots are confirmed by the fact that it was purchased at Chania – the capital of the homonymous

1 The authors would like to thank Dr David Buckton, the former curator of icons at the British Museum, and his successor, Mr Chris Entwistle, for permitting and facilitating the study of the icon, which forms part of the British Museum icon collection, Department of Prehistory and Europe; Caroline R. Cartwright, Rebecca Stacey, Nigel Meeks, Giovanni Verri and Antony Simpson of the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research for their expert scientific contribution to this work; Prof. Beverly Brown, Prof. Leslie Brubaker, Sherry Doyal, Dr Rembrandt Duits, Catherine Higgitt, Dr Loula Kailas, Mr Yanni Petsopoulos, Prof. Dr Vasiliki Tsamakda, and Prof. Maria Vassilaki for their valuable comments and advice; Mrs Panorea Benatou and Mrs Christina Vona for their practical help.

2 For a colour reproduction: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database.aspx.

3 Μ. Μπορμπουδάκης (ed.), *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης (Από τον Χάνδακα ως την Μόσχα και την Αγία Πετρούπολη)* (Herakleion, 1993), p. 458 (no. 100).

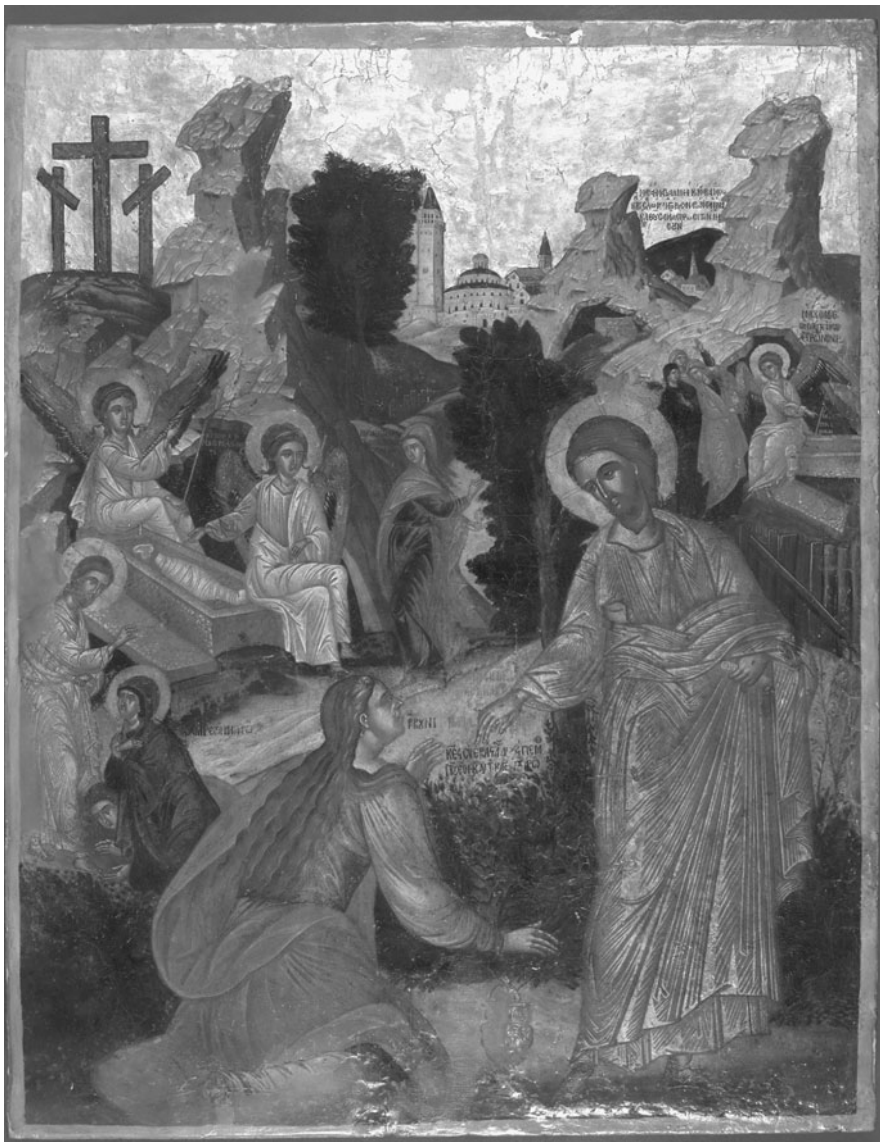


Fig. 12.1a Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, end of the sixteenth-beginning of the seventeenth century, egg tempera on cypress wood (*cupressus sempervirens*.L.), British Museum (BM1994,0501.3), London (© The Trustees of the British Museum): before conservation.



Fig. 12.1b Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, end of the sixteenth-beginning of the seventeenth century, egg tempera on cypress wood (*cupressus sempervirens*.L.), British Museum (BM1994,0501.3), London (© The Trustees of the British Museum): after conservation and the removal of later restoration.



Fig. 12.2 Michael Damaskinos, icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, late sixteenth century, egg tempera on wood, Saint Catherine's monastery, Herakleion, Crete (used with the permission of the Holy Archbishopric of Crete).

western prefecture of the island, situated on its north coast – by Thomas B Sandwith, CB, who was her Majesty's consul on Crete between 1870 and 1885, probably in the year 1895, upon his return to the island as a tourist.⁴ In 1924, his daughter, Charlotte C. Boys-Smith, who had accompanied her father on that trip, donated the icon to the National Gallery in London in his memory.⁵ Finally, in 1994 the panel was transferred to the British Museum, where it forms part of the Museum's icon collection today.⁶

Both icons represent various stages of the announcement of Christ's resurrection, as narrated in all four Gospels, in virtually identical compositions, organized in six, successive levels and accompanied by Greek inscriptions. In the first level we have the *Noli Me Tangere* ('Touch Me Not') the subject under which both icons are known. The scene is based on Saint John's Gospel 20:17 'ΜΑΡΙΑ ΜΗ ΜΟΥ ΑΠΤΟΥ' ('Touch Me Not', inscription in red, capital Greek, to the right and left of Christ's right hand). Christ is standing to the right, accompanied by the capital IC XC in red, placed above his halo, and he holds a closed scroll in his left hand. He addresses Mary Magdalene, who is depicted kneeling to the left, 'ΓΥΝΑΙ ΤΙ ΚΑΑΙΕΙΣ; ΤΙΝΑ ΖΗΤΕΙΣ' ('Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?', John 20:15; inscription in red, capital Greek, above Christ's right hand). In her turn, the Magdalene, before she recognizes Christ, with tears streaming down her face, asks him 'ΚΥΡΙΕ ΕΙ ΣΥ ΕΒΑΣΤΑΣΑΣ ΑΥΤΟΝ, ΕΙΠΕ ΜΟΙ ΠΟΥ ΕΘΗΚΑΣ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΚΑΤΩ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΑΡΩ' ('Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away', John 20:15; inscription in black, capital Greek, under the fingers of Christ's right hand). However, once she realizes that Christ is standing before her, she addresses him as 'ΠΑΒΟΥΝΙ' ('Rabboni; which is to say, Master', John 20:16; inscription in black, capital Greek, to the right of Magdalene's mouth). The rich, loose hair and the red garment identify the figure of the Magdalene in all the remaining levels in the two icons. Between the two figures stands the bottle with ointment, which Mary Magdalene had brought with her in order to anoint Jesus' body.

In the second level, to the left, the scene of the 'ΧΑΙΠΕ ΤΩΝ ΜΥΡΡΗΦΟΡΩΝ' is depicted ('All Hail of the Myrrh-bearers', inscription in black, capital Greek,

4 The authors would like to thank Mr Stephen Boys Smith for providing this information via email communication on 16 November 2006. Boys Smith's conclusion that the icon was bought during Sandwith's subsequent visit to Crete in 1895 is based on a handwritten note dated to 1924 by Sandwith's son-in-law which mentions 'an old Greek painting formerly on a monastery on Crete, and bought thence some thirty years ago ...'. See also J. Chittenden and C. Seltman, *Greek Art. A Commemorative Catalogue of an Exhibition held in 1946 at the Royal Academy Burlington House London* (London, 1947), p. 50 (no. 356).

5 Catalogue Number: National Gallery 3961 (NG3961).

6 The transfer was facilitated by the curator at the time, Dr David Buckton, who thus established the British Museum icon collection. See also R. Cormack, *Icons* (The British Museum, 2007), p. 91, fig. 55 (on p. 89), and p. 119 (no. 28).

to the right, behind the two kneeling Marys).⁷ This scene is named after the greeting Christ used to address the two Marys, depicted here to the right. According to Matthew's Gospel 28:9, Christ met the two Marys (named as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary in Matthew 28:1) on their way back from Christ's empty sepulchre, where they were informed by an angel that Christ had risen. Although the scene is known in Byzantine art invariably as 'Chairete' from the above-mentioned passage in Saint Matthew's Gospel, its iconography, from a very early date, was primarily based on homilies of Church Fathers. While Matthew mentions Mary Magdalene, seen here at Christ's feet, his text does not mention the presence of the Virgin Mary identified here by a halo and by the red, capital Greek inscription ΜΡ ΘΥ (abbreviation for ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ, Mother of God) seen on the left. Two prominent fourth-century Church Fathers, Saints John Chrysostom (345–407) and Gregory of Nyssa (335–94) suggested that the 'other Mary', who in Matthew 27:56 is called 'Mary the mother of James and Joseph' can be identified as the Virgin Mary.⁸ This suggestion was incorporated into the iconography of the scene by the sixth century.⁹ The Virgin's presence in the scene remained undisputed – the eighteenth-century painter's manual by Dionysios of Fournas explicitly instructs the Byzantine artists to include her in the iconography.¹⁰

In the third level, to the left, the painter returns to John's Gospel (20:11–13) to depict a scene, which, chronologically, precedes the *Touch Me Not* episode: the recognizable figure of the Magdalene, with the rich hair and the red cloak, arrives at Christ's Tomb – 'ΜΑΡΙΑ ΔΕ ΕΙΣΤΗΚΕΙ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΩ ΜΗΝΗΙΩ ΚΛΑΙΟΥΣΑ ΕΞΩ' ('But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping', John 20:11; inscription in black, capital Greek, to the left of Magdalene's head). The dark triangle visible under her left eye, confirms that she is crying. Although in the first level Magdalene's tears are shown streaking down her cheeks in a very naturalistic manner, the way of depicting sorrow and tears in the form of dark triangles had been popular earlier, particularly during the middle Byzantine period.¹¹

7 See below, p. 191.

8 J.D. Breckenridge, "'Et Prima Vidit': The Iconography of the Appearance of Christ to His Mother", *ArtB* 39 (1957), p. 13; K. Weitzmann, 'Eine Vorikonoklastische Ikone des Sinai mit der Darstellung des Chairete', in *Studies in the Arts at Sinai, Essays by Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton, 1982), p. 108. John Chrysostom: PG 58:777 ('Υπόμνημα εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Ματθαῖον τὸν Εὐαγγελιστὴν, Ὁμιλία ΠΗ'); Gregory of Nyssa: PG 46:648A (Εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πάσχα καὶ Περί τῆς Τριμήρου Προθεσμίας τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἀναστάσεως Λόγοι Πέντε. Λόγος Β').

9 As seen, for example, in the Rabbula Gospels, dated 586: C. Cecchelli, I. Furlani and M. Salmi (eds), *The Rabbula Gospels. Evangeliiarii Syriaci, Vulgo Rabbulae*, in *Bibliotheca Medicea-Laurentiana* (Plut. I, 56) *Adservati Ornamenta Edenda Notisque Instruenda* (Olten and Lausanne, 1959), fol. 13a.

10 P. Hetherington (trans.), *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fournas. An English Translation, with commentary, of cod. Gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Leningrad* (London, 1974), p. 39.

11 H. Maguire, 'The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art', *DOP* 31 (1977), p. 169.

Therefore, the Byzantine traditional ways to capture grief and anguish have been used alongside more naturalistic expression for such feelings. Magdalene faces two angels, who are sitting on the tomb. One sits cross-legged pointing with his right hand at the empty shroud clothes, while the second angel points also with his right hand upwards, to Heaven, where the resurrected Christ will soon be. The inscription in red, capital Greek, situated in the opening of the sepulchre, between the two angels, reads: 'ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΟΥΣΙΝ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΚΕΙΝΟΙ ΓΥΝΑΙ ΤΙ ΚΛΑΙΕΙΣ' ('And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?', John 20:13).

In the fourth level, there is a scene based on Saint Mark's narrative 16:1–8, depicted in the way that is also described in the eighteenth century painter's manual by Dionysios of Fourni.¹² The three Marys, headed by the Magdalene, arrive at the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with myrrh (because of this, the scene is known as the *Myrrhophoroi* [unguent bearers] in Byzantine art), where an angel informs them that Jesus has resurrected: 'ΜΗΝ ΕΚΘΑΜΒΕΙΣΘΕ ΙΗΣΟΥΝ ΖΗΤΕΙΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΝΑΖΑΡΗΝΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΣΤΑΥΡΩΜΕΝΟΝ' ('Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified', Mark 16:6; inscription in black, capital Greek, to the right on the mountain's basis). With his right hand he points at the empty tomb, on which he is sitting and he informs them: 'ΙΔΕ Ο ΤΟΠΟΣ ΟΠΟΥ ΕΘΗΚΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ' ('behold the place where they laid him', Mark 16:6; inscription in red, capital Greek, to the right of the angel's index finger)¹³ (Fig. 12.3).

In the fifth level, seen also on the right side, the two icons differ in their iconography. Damaskinos' signed icon is based on Saint John's Gospel (20:4–5) and shows two disciples, the second and elderly of which is Peter, who approach the sepulchre with Christ's empty clothes. The scene is accompanied by an inscription 'ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΑΚΥΨΑΣ ΒΛΕΠΕΙ ΚΕΙΜΕΝΑ ΤΑ ΟΘΟΝΙΑ' ('And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying', John 20:5; inscription in red, capital Greek). In the British Museum icon, however, we only see the empty clothes, which are also mentioned in Luke's Gospel (24:12). The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the sixth level, in the middle and on the right, while on the left side we have the three crosses standing at Golgotha. The crosses on both icons have been repainted; however, traces on both reveal that the crosses were part of the original painted surfaces.¹⁴ Damaskinos' icon also features the ladder leaning against the middle, taller cross, indicative of the Deposition, as narrated in the Gospels of Mark 15:46 and Luke 23:53. In the British Museum icon recently uncovered traces of what can be interpreted as a ladder can also

12 Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysios of Fourni*, p. 39 (111).

13 The bottom right part of the inscription in the British Museum icon reappeared following cleaning during the conservation process.

14 For the Damaskinos icon: T. Moshos, 'The Conservation Work on the Michael Damaskinos Icons in the Saint Catherine Sinaiton Collection in Heraklion', in N. Jolkkonen, A. Martiskainen, P. Martiskainen and H. Nikkanen (eds), *The Conservation of Late Icons* (Uusi Valamo, The Valamo Art Conservation Institute, 1998), pp. 187–90 (on p. 190). See also below, n. 101.



Fig. 12.3 Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, macro-photograph of red inscription in the scene of the *Myrrophoroi*. The letters on the right side of the photograph were revealed from beneath over-paint during conservation, British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

be seen leaning against the middle cross (Fig. 12.1b), however, positioned on the opposite side to the ladder as represented in the Damaskinos' icon. Rich vegetation covers a large part of the first level. Two big trees are depicted, one in the centre and the other at the back, on the left, accompanied by a fence, on the right. Part of the fence can also be discerned behind Christ's figure in the first level, to the right. In the British Museum icon the artist employed both under drawing and incised lines (Fig. 12.4) for the first four levels as well as for the city of Jerusalem.¹⁵

At the top, middle part of the Saint Catherine's icon an inscription in red, capital Greek can be seen, which is not included in the British Museum panel. It reads: 'ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣ Ο ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΠΡΩΙ ΠΡΩΤΗ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΥ ΕΦΑΝΗ ΜΑΡΙΑ ΤΗ ΜΑΓΔΑΛΗΝΗ ΑΝΑΤΕΛΟΝΤΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΗΛΙΟΥ' ('Now when Jesus was risen early in the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene', Mark 16:9). Additionally, of course, the British Museum work does not bear the signature of its artist. Although in the Damaskinos icon the painter's current signature, in black,

¹⁵ See below, pp. 205–8.



Fig. 12.4 Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, image showing distribution of incised lines (information extracted from the x-radiographs), British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

capital Greek, seen to the bottom right – ‘ΧΕΙΡ ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ’ (‘by the hand of Michael Damaskinos’) – is a later addition,¹⁶ a recent cleaning of the icon has revealed letters from the original signature.¹⁷ In its turn, Damaskinos’ icon seems to lack the inscription in black, capital Greek, situated between the two mountains at the back in the British Museum icon: ‘ΜΑΡΙΑ Η ΜΑΓΔΑΛΗΝΗ

¹⁶ It is generally accepted that it was added to the work during its restoration in 1812: Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, p. 458.

¹⁷ Moshos, ‘The Conservation Work on the Michael Damaskinos Icons’, p. 190.

KAI MARIA TOY IAKΩBOY KAI ΣΑΛΩΜΗ ΗΓΟΡΑΣΑΝ ΑΡΩΜΑΤΑ ΙΝΑ ΕΛΘΟΥΣΑΙ ΑΛΕΙΨΩΣΙΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ' ('Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him, Mark 16:1), which, as technical examination has revealed, is also a later addition.¹⁸

Finally, while all the inscriptions are either in red or black, they do not display any consistent colour coding for the figures (e.g. black for the Magdalene, red for Jesus and the angels), since both colours have been used for the inscriptions accompanying the angel in the fourth level.

The predominant opinion regarding the British Museum icon suggests that it is a copy of the one that bears the signature of the acclaimed post-Byzantine Cretan painter. It could, perhaps, be based on a scaled-down *anthibolon* – a perforated pattern used for tracing the basic designs of works commonly used by Cretan painters for quick and efficient reproductions.¹⁹ Damaskinos' reputation and the quality of his works unsurprisingly led to his *anthibola* being in great demand after his death in 1592/93.²⁰ His signed work at the Saint Catherine's monastery is, actually, part of a series of six icons that were originally painted for the monastery of Hagios Antonios Vrontisiou in Herakleion.²¹ It has been suggested that we do not know anything about the patron of this set of icons; however, during a visit at the Saint Catherine's monastery in 2007, the author Angeliki Lymberopoulou discovered that at the bottom of the icon depicting the Holy Liturgy there are two portraits of donors, one male, to the left and one female, to the right, which so far have been interpreted in the bibliography as Adam and Eve.²² Their accompanying inscriptions in red, capital Greek lettering read: 'ΔΕΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ' and 'ΔΕΗΣΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΔΟΥΛΗΣ' ... ('prayer of the donor Georgios' and 'prayer of the [female] donor' ...).

Some of the Damaskinos' icons were copied by known Cretan artists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²³ We cannot, however, ignore the fact that the copies based on icons from this Damaskinos' cycle stylistically differ substantially from the painter's originals.²⁴ At the same time the cleaning

18 See below, p. 211.

19 A. Lymberopoulou, 'The Painter Angelos and post-Byzantine Art', in C.M. Richardson (ed.), *Locating Renaissance Art* (New Haven and London 2007), p. 181. Analysis using infrared reflectography (IRR) to reveal under drawing suggests the use of an *anthibolon* in the production of the British Museum icon is very likely (Fig. 12.8); in this case, the difference in size would have made necessary the scaling down of Damaskinos' pattern: see below, p. 206, n. 77.

20 M. Κωνσταντουδάκη-Κιτρομηλίδου, 'Παραγγελίες Πινάκων, Εργαστήριο, Κυκλοφορία Σχεδίων του Μιχαήλ Δαμασκηνού στο Χάνδακα. Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα (1558-1593)', *Θησαυρίσματα* 43 (2004), [Μνημόσυνο Μανούσου Μανούσακα]: esp. pp. 255–6 and 269–71.

21 Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, pp. 449–61, (nos 96–101). See also Moshos, 'The Conservation Work on the Michael Damaskinos Icons', p. 187.

22 Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, pp. 454, 455 (no. 99), colour plate 101 (wrongly labelled as 'First Ecumenical Council').

23 Ibid., pp. 453, 457, 465 (no. 107), colour plate 107.

24 Compare, for example, the copy of the *Divine Liturgy*, based on the master's original: ibid., p. 465 (no. 107) and pp. 455–7 (no. 99) respectively.

of the British Museum icon has revealed, particularly in the middle and some parts on the left a dexterous and talented painter whose style closely resembles that of the original. The technical investigation has revealed that the wood of the British Museum icon has been prepared with great care.²⁵ We know that Damaskinos was very meticulous in his choice of the wood for his works, which is confirmed in the panels he used in his series for Hagios Antonios Vrontisiou.²⁶ Furthermore, the British Museum icon, which as was mentioned above was bought in Chania was, in all probability, also painted on Crete, since the wood is cypress (*cupressus sempervirens*.L.), a type of wood commonly and widely used in Cretan icon painting.²⁷ Nevertheless, in order to attribute the British Museum icon to Damaskinos, we need to have solid proofs, based beyond stylistic comparisons with his works and circumstantial evidence. The British Museum icon may of course also have been produced by a workshop apprentice or a talented follower, but this would be difficult to establish as almost nothing is known about Damaskinos' assistants.²⁸

Returning to the iconography, *Noli me Tangere* was a subject very common in Cretan painting from the mid-fifteenth century onwards.²⁹ The island had come under Venetian domination in 1211 and by the mid-fifteenth century its hybrid society, consisting of native Greek Orthodox Cretans and of Catholic Venetians, was experiencing one of the most prolific and fertile cross-cultural interactions known in European history, apparent in all levels of society – mainly in the cities – and amply manifested in art – primarily in panel painting.³⁰ The predominant opinion about the popularity of the subject suggests that it is connected to the fact that Magdalene was of great importance to the Franciscan order, the Catholic order most accepted by the natives on the island.³¹ It is possible that the popularity of the subject was

25 See below, p. 205.

26 Moshos, 'The Conservation Work on the Michael Damaskinos Icons', p. 187.

27 The authors would like to thank Caroline Cartwright who provided this information on 29 June 2006; see also below, n. 65.

28 The main thesis on the painter – Μαρία Κωνσταντουδάκη-Κιτρομηλίδου, *Μιχαήλ Δαμασκηνός (1530/35-1591/92). Συμβολή στη μελέτη της ζωγραφικής του*, Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών, (Athens, 1988) – can be accessed at: www.ekt.gr.

29 Selective examples include: N. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Cretan School (15th–16th Century)* (Athens, 1983), p. 44 (no. 37); M. Acheimastou-Potamianou (ed.), *From Byzantium to El Greco. Greek Frescoes and Icons* (Athens, 1987), p. 187 (no. 58); Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, p. 407 (no. 50); N. Chatzidakis, *Venetiae quasi alterum Byzantium: Candia to Venice. Greek Icons in Italy, 15th–16th Centuries* (Athens 1993), p. 92 (no. 19).

30 See A. Lymberopoulou, *The Church of the Archangel Michael at Kavalariana. Art and Society on Fourteenth-Century Venetian-Dominated Crete* (London 2006), pp. 194–217 (with relevant references); A. Lymberopoulou, 'Late and post-Byzantine Art under Venetian Rule: Frescoes vs Icons and Crete in the middle', in L. James (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 351–70.

31 Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, p. 457. See also K. Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen. Preaching and Popular Devotion in the later Middle Ages* (Princeton, New Jersey, 2000), esp. pp. 85–99.

the result, as with most fashionable things on Crete during this period, of the combination of subjects favourite among both sides of the Christian faith: the resurrected Christ is the focal point of the Greek Orthodox faith, while the penitent Mary Magdalene is of great importance for the Catholic faith. The target audience for such icons/devotional panels was both Orthodox and Catholic and, therefore, it was only natural that the urban Cretan hybrid society gave rise to and embraced works, which reflected and represented its most characteristic aspect in the best possible way.

As discussed above, in both the Damaskinos and British Museum icons the painted surface around this central subject is filled with scenes, based on the account of the Resurrection as narrated in the four Gospels. The combination of many scenes in one painting is not unknown in Byzantine art.³² However, in these two icons, the additional scenes are not secondary, as for example the Malchus episode in the Betrayal scene,³³ but represent different moments of the same event. Furthermore, the inscriptions based on the Gospels of Matthew and Mark that accompany the scenes in both icons form an integral part of the Greek Orthodox Liturgy read on the morning of the Holy Saturday (Matthew 28:1–20), Easter Sunday and the third Sunday after Easter, known as the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers (the latter two include readings from Mark 16:1–8).

It has been suggested that strong western, mainly sixteenth-century Italian influences, can be detected in a number of figures in Damaskinos' work and, as a consequence, also in the British Museum icon. For example, the third-level Magdalene is considered to have been inspired by similar figures encountered in the works by Titian and Veronese, while the fourth-level Marys are similar to figures seen in works by Tintoretto. The bottle in the foreground and the buildings at the back are also regarded as western influences. Since these

32 M. Borboudakis, K. Gallas and K. Wessel, *Byzantinisches Kreta* (Munich 1983), p. 152. See, for example, Cecchelli et al., *Rabbula Gospels*, fol. 13a.

33 Narrative for the Betrayal: Matthew 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–11. Narrative for the Malchus' episode: Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50; John 18:10. See for example, the Betrayal scene at the church of the Archangel Michael at Kavalariana, Kandanos, Selino, Chania, dated 1327/28 (Lymberopoulou, *Kavalariana*, fig. 20) and in the church of Hagios Georgios in Hagios Konstantinos (Artos), Rethymno, dated to 1401 (I. Spatharakis, *Dated Byzantine Wall Paintings of Crete* [London, 2001], fig. 135). Other iconographic scenes include secondary subjects, such as the Nativity and depicting the Dormition of Saints (e.g. of Saint Savva, of Saint Ephraim the Syrian: A. Drandaki, *Greek Icons 14th–18th century. The Rena Andreadis Collection* [Athens, 2002], p. 114 (no. 24) and Lymberopoulou, 'The Painter Angelos', p. 202, fig. 5.25 respectively). Examples of the *Noli me Tangere* scene in Byzantine and post-Byzantine art, where in the background features the sepulchre with Christ's empty clothes with or without the attending angels, highlight the main event in the foreground and, therefore, could be interpreted as 'secondary'; for examples: A. Καλλιγά-Γερουλάνου, 'Η Σκηνή τοῦ "Μή Μοῦ Ἄπτου" ὅπως ἐμφανίζεται σέ Βυζαντινά Μνημεῖα καί ἡ Μορφή ποῦ παίρνει στόν 16ο Αἰώνα', *DChAE* 4, 3 (1962–63): pp. 203–30, pls 61–6. The detailed narrative of the two icons discussed here, however, clearly differs from these examples.

elements have already been extensively discussed in the bibliography,³⁴ two other iconographic elements present in the two icons, which have not been commented upon so far would be the focus here: the third-level cross-legged angel and the composition as a whole. Their study can help to identify the models used by the painter.

Although the posture of the angel on the right in the scene of the Marys at the tomb, in the fourth level, as well as that of the angel in the third level, are very common for the iconography of such scenes,³⁵ this is not the case for the angel who is depicted sitting cross-legged. Such a pose is unusual for the iconography of the Marys at the tomb scene, while naturalistic cross-legged figures in general are a very unusual feature for Byzantine art.

Cross-legged figures can be found in Byzantine manuscript illumination from the eleventh century onwards. Often it is the figure of David in Psalters,³⁶ depicted as a king as well as a musician since he is the composer of the psalms. In the famous twelfth-century Skylitzis manuscript in Madrid, a related pose also occurs in images of the emperor.³⁷ It has been suggested that the cross-legged posture points to a western influence, which, in its turn, went back to Arabic examples.³⁸ However, Leslie Brubaker is sceptical towards this opinion, since she believes that a direct influence from Arabic culture – as opposed to an indirect one via the West – on the art of the middle Byzantine period, is more credible.³⁹

A number of Byzantine manuscripts existed in Italy,⁴⁰ where Damaskinos spent a considerable time: he stayed in Venice between 1568 and 1569, he travelled to Sicily where he spent three years (from 1569 until 1571) and then he returned to Venice where he spent almost a decade (from 1574 until 1582/83 or 1583/84).⁴¹ Even if we assume that Damaskinos may, perhaps, have had access to such or similar manuscripts during his prolonged stay in Italy, in all these manuscripts the cross-legged figures seem unnatural and uncomfortable; there is, truly, no comparison between what we see in middle Byzantine manuscript illumination and what we are presented with in the

34 Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, pp. 457–8 (esp. p. 458).

35 See, for example, the scene at Kavalariana (Lymberopoulou, *Kavalariana*, fig. 24) and in the church of Hagios Georgios at Apostoloi Pediados, Herakleion, dated 1375 (M. Bissinger, *Kreta. Byzantinische Wandmalerei* [Munich, 1995], pp. 184–5 (no. 153), fig. 148 [on p. 344]).

36 A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris, 1984), p. 239, fig. 370.

37 V. Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 275–6 and n. 1 (on p. 276), and figs 230, 401, 403, 404, 422, 426, 428, 432, 438, 439, 440, 458, 459, 460, 464, 469 (bottom), 470, 492, 520, 530, 532, 535, 536 (bottom), 594, 604.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 275–6 and n. 1 (on p. 276).

39 The author Angeliki Lymberopoulou would like to thank Prof. Leslie Brubaker for sharing her views on the subject via a verbal communication.

40 H.C. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New Haven and London, 2004), pp. 15, 494 and n. 52 (on p. 606), 517–18. See also *ODB* vol. 1, p. 285.

41 M. Constandoudaki-Kitromilides, 'Michael Damaskinos', G. Speake (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition* (2 vols, London, 2000), vol. 1, p. 443.

two icons. There is a much more convincing potential source of inspiration: cross-legged figures seen in the work of the great Florentine master, Michelangelo (1475–1564), would have been well-known and well-accessible to many painters of Damaskinos' period and beyond. Michelangelo's most famous and influential work is unquestionably the fresco decoration of the Sistine chapel in Rome (1508–12), where the cross-legged pose was used for the Erythrean sibyl (Fig. 12.5).⁴² In fact the sibyl is sitting exactly like the angel in the two icons, with the right leg crossed over the left.

We do not know whether or not Damaskinos ever visited Rome and the Sistine chapel. This, however, would not have been necessary for him to be familiar with Michelangelo's art. Around the middle of the sixteenth century, a variety of copies, principally in the form of engravings, would have been available in Venice, where Damaskinos, as it was mentioned above, spent a considerable amount of time. The Erythrean sibyl could be studied through works by engravers such as Giorgio Ghisi (1520/21–82) (dated around 1549)⁴³ and Adamo Scultori (1530–1585) (dated in the 1560s),⁴⁴ which were very popular.

It is worth noting here, that in selecting a pose from the work of the Florentine artist, Damaskinos chose one that had not already been copied by the great sixteenth-century Venetian masters and admirers of Michelangelo – Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese – who otherwise functioned as role-models for the Cretan. Perhaps Damaskinos chose a cross-legged figure to better represent the relaxed atmosphere of the scene, since the angel informs the Magdalene that she does not need to cry. It is equally possible that Damaskinos chose specifically the posture of the figure of a sibyl, since sibyls had announced the coming of Christ;⁴⁵ the angel in the scene holds a similar role, for he announces his Resurrection. Finally, it would not be unthinkable to suggest that Damaskinos chose to copy from probably the best known and most influential work of an immensely famous artist, with whom he happened to share part of his first name (Michael).

42 *Michelangelo: La Cappella Sistina. Documentazione e Interpretazioni*, vol. 1 (Vatican City, Tokyo, Novara, 1994); *Michelangelo: La Cappella Sistina. Rapporto sul restauro degli affreschi della volta*, vol. 2, F. Mancinelli (ed.) (Vatican City, Tokyo, Novara, 1994); *Michelangelo: La Cappella Sistina. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Roma, marzo 1990*, vol. 3, K. Weil-Garris Brandt (ed.) (Vatican City, Tokyo, Novara, 1994).

43 A. Moltedo (ed.), *La Sistina Riprodotta. Gli Affreschi di Michelangelo dalle Stampe del Cinquecento alle Campagne Fotografiche Anderson*, (Rome, 1991), pp. 73–4, 75 (18/2). See also L. Price Amerson, Jr. (ed.), *The Fortuna of Michelangelo. Prints, drawings and Small Sculpture from California Collections* (Sacramento, 1975), pp. 10–14 (p. 10, no. 6).

44 Moltedo, *Sistina Riprodotta*, pp. 85, 89 (19/29). See also Price Amerson, *Fortuna of Michelangelo*, pp. 14–15.

45 M. Κωνσταντουδάκη-Κιτρομηλίδου, 'Ο Θεοφάνης, ο Marcantonio Raimondi, θέματα all'antica και grottesche', *Ευφρόσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, (2 vols, Athens 1991), vol. 1, p. 280, and n. 43.



Fig. 12.5 Michelangelo, Erythraean sibyl, 1508–12, fresco, Sistine Chapel, The Vatican, Rome (photo out of copyright [The Warburg Institute, Photographic Collection]).



Fig. 12.6 Hendrick de Clerck, *Noli Me Tangere*, last quarter of the sixteenth century, oil on wood, location unknown (probably in a private collection) (photo out of copyright [The Warburg Institute, Photographic Collection]).

The detail of the angels aside, what was Damaskinos' source of inspiration for creating a complex *Noli me Tangere* with added scenes? In fourteenth-century Italian art, we have examples where this scene is combined with the Marys at the tomb (e.g. the frescoes in Santa Maria di Donna Regina in Naples, which is considered to be a work by the school of Pietro Cavallini [c.1240–after 1330]).⁴⁶ However, Italian painters active in the second half of the sixteenth century rarely depicted many scenes on the same painted surface, they preferred to focus on a single subject.⁴⁷ An area where multiple scenes within one work was still common around the second half of the sixteenth century was the Low Countries/Southern Netherlands, as is demonstrated in examples by Hendrick de Clerck (c.1570–1630) (Fig. 12.6)

⁴⁶ Black and white photograph available at the Photographic Collection, The Warburg Institute, University of London: http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/VPC/VPC_search/record.php?record=2287.

⁴⁷ The author Angeliki Lymberopoulou would like to thank Prof. Beverly Brown and Dr Rembrandt Duits for providing this information.



Fig. 12.7 Jan Sadeler, *Noli Me Tangere*, after 1580, engraving, British Museum, London (photo out of copyright [The Warburg Institute, Photographic Collection]).

and by Jan Sadeler (1550–1600) (Fig. 12.7), which copies a work by Marten de Vos (1532–1603), who was, actually, De Clerck’s master. Both display elements that are included in the Cretan works: the *Noli Me Tangere* scene in the first level and the Marys at the Tomb and the three crosses at Golgotha in the background (De Clerck), and the Magdalene with the city of Jerusalem in the distance (Sadeler). It is well documented that Cretan painters were copying works by Flemish artists; we know that the famous and popular seventeenth-century Theodore Poulakis, copied from Sadeler’s engravings

(after Martin de Vos' drawings).⁴⁸ It is not implausible, therefore, that Damaskinos turned to Flemish art in search for inspiration for this specific icon and to convey basic and important iconographic subjects of Christ's Resurrection. Despite Damaskinos' substantial stay in Italy during the second half of the sixteenth century his tendency to gather in one painting many scenes from the same subject, neither changed⁴⁹ nor was affected by the different attitude of his contemporary Italian colleagues – perhaps because of his Byzantine training. As it was mentioned above, Byzantine art regularly favoured composite scenes.

Damaskinos' icon is dated to 1590,⁵⁰ that is after the painter's return to Herakleion (in 1583 or 1584) – a date that has not been met with any opposition.⁵¹ Constandoudaki-Kitromilides also dates the whole series of six icons to which it belongs during the late phase of Damaskinos' career – last years of the 1580s and in 1591.⁵² The presence of Italian and Flemish elements in the icon alone, are not indicative of any dating, since they do not presuppose that the painter spent some time in Italy. Damaskinos could have equally seen, studied and been inspired from examples on Crete, since western works of art and copies existed on his native island.⁵³ If, however, we accept a relation between Damaskinos' icon and the Flemish prototypes of the last quarter of the sixteenth century mentioned above, then we have an additional argument that places the icon within the same time frame. In its turn, this time frame offers a *terminus post quem* for the British Museum icon, which could, of course, be by the narrowest of margins.⁵⁴

Technical Observations⁵⁵

The British Museum icon is painted on a wooden panel with two horizontal restraining battens on the reverse. The painted image extends over the whole of the front of the panel, with a thick and glossy varnish coating. In 2005 a condition assessment showed the icon was unstable and required conservation. A detailed technical study was therefore undertaken using X-

48 N.B. Δρανδάκη, 'Εξι Εικόνες του Θεόδωρου Πουλάκη', *Θεσσαυρίσματα* 13 (1976): pp. 205–26.

49 Α. Ξυγγόπουλου, *Σχεδιάσμα Ιστορίας της Θρησκευτικής Ζωγραφικής μετά την Άλωση* (Athens, 1957), pp. 149–50.

50 Καλλιγά-Γερουλάνου, 'Η Σκηνή του "Μή Μοῦ Ἄπτου"', p. 223.

51 Π. Βοκοτόπουλος, *Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας* (Athens, 1990), p. 39, agrees indirectly.

52 Μπορμπουδάκης, *Εικόνες της Κρητικής Τέχνης*, p. 451.

53 Μ.Γ. Κωνσταντουδάκη, 'Μαρτυρίες Ζωγραφικών έργων στο Χάνδακα σε Έγγραφα του 16ου και 17ου Αιώνα', *Θεσσαυρίσματα* 12 (1975): pp. 35–136; Κωνσταντουδάκη-Κιτρομηλίδου, 'Ο Θεοφάνης, ο Marcantonio Raimondi, θέματα all'antica και grottesche', p. 271 and n. 1.

54 Chittenden and Seltman, *Greek Art*, p. 50 (no. 356) date the panel c.1600.

55 With contributions from Caroline Cartwright, Rebecca Stacey and Nigel Meeks, scientists in the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research at the British Museum.

and emission radiography,⁵⁶ ultra violet (UV) and infrared (IR) examination and photography,⁵⁷ optical microscopy,⁵⁸ Raman spectroscopy,⁵⁹ scanning electron microscopy with energy dispersive X-ray analysis (SEM-EDX)⁶⁰ and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS)⁶¹ to investigate the layer structure and to identify the materials employed. While this study was as comprehensive as possible, the areas on the painting from which samples could be taken were limited. For this reason these results should not be viewed as exhaustive. Following this study, conservation of the painting was carried out in the studios of the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research of the British Museum between 2006 and 2008.⁶²

56 X-radiographs were produced using typical exposure conditions of 60–70kV for 25 mA minutes on Kodak Industrex film and then scanned using an Agfa RadView digitizer with a 50 micron pixel size and 12 bit resolution to allow digital manipulation and enhancement of the images. Electron emission (autoradiography: J. Lang and A. Middleton, *Radiography of Cultural Material* [Elsevier, 2004], p. 101) using a heavily filter X-ray beam at 300 kV was carried out on some areas. This provided particularly clear images of paint loss.

57 IR reflectographs were produced using tungsten Elinchrom 500 flashlights with an InGaAs sensor (Osiris Imaging System, manufactured by Opus Instruments, UK), using a six-element 150 mm focal length f/5.6 – f/45 lens and a Schott RG830 (cut-on transmission 50% at 830 nm) glass filter in front of the lens.

58 Mounted and polished cross-sections were examined under reflected visible and UV light at x400 and x600 magnification. Materials present were identified using Raman spectroscopy and SEM-EDX analysis.

59 Raman spectroscopy of grain samples and mounted cross sections was carried out using a Horiba Jobin Yvon Infinity spectrometer with green (532 nm) and near infrared (785nm) lasers, with a maximum power of 4mW at the sample.

60 Samples for SEM-EDX analysis were carbon coated and then examined in a JEOL JSM-840, equipped with an energy-dispersive X-ray (EDX) analyser (Oxford Instruments, ISIS with Si(Li) detector) for elemental analysis.

61 Samples for GC-MS analysis were collected by swabbing or from surface scrapes. Methods of sample preparation and analysis were selected according to sample type. A lipid method was used principally for varnishes and characterization of paint media. Samples were extracted using dichloromethane (DCM) and then derivatized prior to analysis with bis(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide (BSTFA) + 1 % trimethylchlorosilane (TMCS) (to form trimethylsilyl [TMS] derivatives). A protein method was used principally for ground layers and glues or adhesives. Samples were prepared as amino acid extracts by hydrolyzation with HCl and then derivatized prior to analysis with N-(tert-butylidimethylsilyl)-N-methyl-trifluoroacetamide (MTBSTFA) + 1% tert-butylidimethylsilyl chloride (TBDMCS). Samples were analysed using an Agilent 6890N GC coupled to an Agilent 5973N MSD. Mass spectral data were interpreted manually with the aid of the NIST/EPA/NIH Mass Spectral Library version 2.0 and by comparison with published data and reference standards.

62 Only a summary of the work is presented here. Full details are available in the internal Museum report on establishing an approach to the care and conservation of Orthodox icons at the British Museum (Report No. 7449/1, L. Harrison, J. Ambers, C. R. Cartwright, R. Stacey, D. Hook) and attached to the online catalogue of the British Museum icons: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/online_research_catalogues.

Initial Manufacture of the Icon

The construction of the panel seems to follow practices common in post-Byzantine icons and earlier Italian panel paintings⁶³ and employs techniques documented in painters' manuals.⁶⁴

A single wooden panel of *cupressus sempervirens* L., cypress, sometimes called Mediterranean or Italian cypress⁶⁵ was cut in the longitudinal axis and prepared so that it was smooth on the front surface, with a rougher finish (with traces of adze work visible) on the reverse.⁶⁶ Cypress wood was the traditional choice for panel painting in Crete.⁶⁷ It was widely available and its inherent qualities of strength, hardness, fine grain, resistance to splitting and warping and ease of cutting and carving were ideal for this purpose. Furthermore, as cypress retains its fragrance, it is often resistant to some insects.⁶⁸ Two well fitting wooden battens, also of cypress, were then attached horizontally to the reverse of the panel, at equal distances from the top and bottom edges. No nails are visible on the reverse; there are no nail heads or nail ends bent at right angles into the batten and no inserted wooden plugs, as are sometimes used to cover the exposed bent nail ends.⁶⁹ Instead radiography revealed that short, flat-headed nails were used. These were equally spaced, inserted from the front of the panel and not long enough to penetrate the reverse of the battens.

63 D. Bomford, J. Dunkerton, D. Gordon and A. Roy, *Art in the Making Italian Painting Before 1400* (London, 1989), pp. 11–48; L. Bouras, 'Working drawings of painters in Greece after the fall of Constantinople', in M. Acheimastou-Potaminaou (ed.), *From Byzantium to El Greco Greek Frescoes and Icons* (Athens, 1987), pp. 54–6; J. Dunkerton, S. Foister, D. Gordon and N. Penny, *Giotto to Dürer: Early European Painting in the National Gallery*, (London, 1991), pp. 152–192; K. Milanou, 'The techniques of post-Byzantine icons of the 15th century. Observations on works of the Benaki Museum collection', in N. Jolkkonen and H. Nikkanen (eds), *Changes in post-Byzantine icon painting techniques*, (The Valamo Art Conservation Institute, 2001), pp. 5–6; K. Milanou, C. Vourvopoulou, L. Vranopoulou and A.L. Kalliga, *Icons by the Hand of Angelos. The Painting Method of a Fifteenth-Century Cretan Painter* (Athens, 2008).

64 Hetherington, *The "Painter's Manual" of Dionysios of Fourni*, pp. 1–16; D.V Thompson (trans.), *Cennino d'Andrea Cennini's The Craftsman's Handbook (Il libro dell'arte)* (2nd ed. New York, 1960).

65 Identified by Caroline Cartwright of the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research of the British Museum, by examining fracture transverse, radial longitudinal and tangential longitudinal surfaces under a Leica Aristomet biological optical microscope at between x50 to x520.

66 A. Papadopoulou, 'Traditional wood technology and problems relating to wooden supports', in N. Jolkkonen, A. Martiskainen, P. Martiskainen and H. Nikkanen (eds), *The Conservation of Late Icons*, pp. 31–40 (esp. p. 33).

67 Milanou et al., *Icons by the Hand of Angelos*, p. 26.

68 <http://www.cedarwoodfurniture.com/cedarfacts.html> (accessed 8 March 2010).

69 Milanou et al., *Icons by the Hand of Angelos*, p. 26; Papadopoulou, 'Traditional wood technology', p. 34; L. Uzielli, 'Historical overview of panel-making techniques in central Italy', in K. Dardes and A. Rothe (eds), *The Structural Conservation of Panel Paintings* (Los Angeles, 1998), pp. 110–35 (esp. pp. 122–5).

Although competently carried out this method would not necessarily have been effective at keeping either the panel flat or the battens in place should the panel cup (warp) or develop a twist. Any such movement would be expected to cause the battens to ease off.

Little is known of the workshop practice of Damaskinos and it is not clear whether he prepared the panels himself, or if carpenters or assistants were employed, as was often the case in earlier Cretan painters' workshops⁷⁰ and their Italian counterparts.⁷¹ The method employed to nail the battens to this icon could suggest the work of a less skilled artisan or apprentice who did not understand the practical purpose of their support. However the work may equally have been undertaken by a skilled hand, fully understanding the stability of the well chosen piece of wood, and only using the battens following the rules of traditional practice.

Plain (tabby) weave cloth was then glued on to the smoothed front surface of the panel, presumably to cover any imperfections and to provide an even surface and 'key' for the subsequent application of the ground layers.⁷² Although it was not possible to sample or identify either the cloth or glue used in this case, linen soaked in animal glue was traditionally employed for this purpose.⁷³ A smooth white ground of protein bound gypsum⁷⁴ was then applied to the whole front surface of the panel and scraped smooth. No ground was applied on the reverse of the icon.

The layout of the image (the positions of figures, drapery and architecture) seems to have been transferred onto the ground layer from an *anthibolon* (cartoon) by pricking it and pouncing through the pin-holes with a carbon-containing material and the resulting dots then joined up into drawn lines.⁷⁵ Evidence for the use of this technique can be seen in the IR reflectographs, which reveal an image of elements of the under drawing unobscured by the paint layers above (Fig. 12.8).

70 M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, 'Taste and the market in Cretan icons in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries', in M. Acheimastou-Potaminaou (ed.), *From Byzantium to El Greco*, pp. 51–3 (esp. p. 52).

71 Uzielli, 'Historical overview of panel painting techniques', pp. 112–13.

72 The term 'ground' is used throughout this section to describe the smooth white preparation layer between the cloth and painted and gilded layers. Due to the nature of the paint and ground layers, it was not possible to image this textile with any of the techniques available. Its presence was only confirmed when a section was revealed following the removal of previous restoration from an area of damage during the 2006–2008 conservation campaign.

73 Thompson, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, p. 70.

74 Identified using Raman spectroscopy and optical microscopy of paint cross sections.

75 C.C. Bambach, *Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop Theory and Practice 1300–1600*, (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 56–60 (esp. p. 60) and 76–9 (esp. p. 79); Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer*, pp. 169–70; Bouras, 'Working drawings of painters in Greece', pp. 54–6.

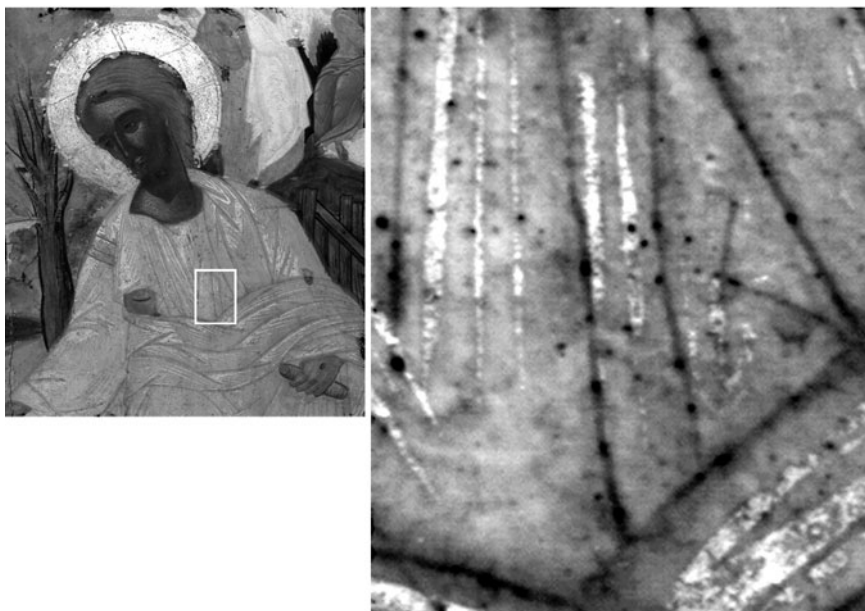


Fig. 12.8 Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, detail of infrared reflectograph revealing an image of pounced dots and drawn lines unobserved by the paint layers above, British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

From the X-radiographic images it is clear that some of the lines were then further incised into the ground with a sharp implement so that they could be seen throughout the painting process (Fig. 12.9). Interestingly, the background (trees and rocks), the angels' wings and the faces of the figures were not incised (Fig. 12.4).⁷⁶ This may explain slight variations in position and appearance between this work and the *Damaskinos* icon. The major difference in size between the two panels remains. If both come from the same study the *anthibolon* would necessarily have been scaled down. This is entirely possible, since such changes in scale were common practice in Renaissance Italy with the use of a 'proportional squaring grid' being the commonest method.⁷⁷

Other evidence of under drawing, without accompanying incised lines, can be seen in the IR reflectograph in the tree branches and in the scene of the *Myrrophoroi* (fourth level, right side), where the complete drapery of the left figure and folds of the sleeve of the middle figure are drawn in (Fig. 12.10). No further areas of under drawing could be found but the presence of under painting, or at least of a wash of colour (*imprimatura* or *proplasmos*), is also

⁷⁶ There is one exception – an incised line for the left eye and brow of the Virgin in the 'Chairete' scene (second level, left side).

⁷⁷ Bambach, *Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 51 and 131.

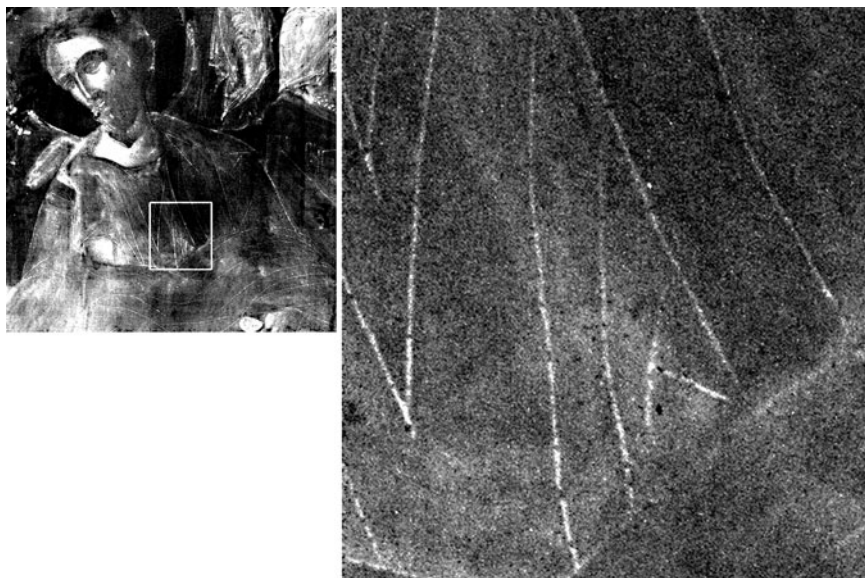


Fig. 12.9 Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, detail of x-radiographic image showing incised lines into the ground layer as part of the drawing process, British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

detectable on the faces. Only slight changes in design (*pentimenti*) between the under drawing and the finished image are apparent (Fig. 12.10).

There are a number of possible explanations for the use and distribution of the different techniques of preparation drawing. A skilled or master painter might have only needed to pounce and incise the main lines and drapery folds to be able to place the figures on the panel and produce an accurate copy from a prototype.⁷⁸ In this case the painter would only need some minor preparatory under drawing, executing the remainder of the image free hand during painting. Alternatively, perhaps it was intended that an apprentice would paint the incised areas.

Another explanation, supported by evidence of the under drawing and *impreparatura* is that a heavily worked up drawing was produced. This was then painted with only minor alterations in design. A painter less familiar with the subject or a workshop apprentice could have undertaken this preparation, mapping out the position of the figures and folds and drawing the rest of the image extensively, including under painted washes of colour to the flesh areas. The painting would then have been produced following the under drawing

⁷⁸ Bouras, 'Working Drawings of Painters in Greece', p. 54; Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysios of Fourna*, p. 5.



Fig. 12.10 Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, detail of infrared reflectograph revealing images of under drawing and slight changes in design (*pentimenti*), British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

almost exactly, thereby covering the majority of the preparation drawing and making it largely invisible to IR examination.

Following the production of the under drawing the areas to be gilded (the background and haloes) were first coated with a red earth based bole,⁷⁹ and then covered with thin metal leaf of soft high purity gold,⁸⁰ which was burnished. Only the halos and traces along the profile of the mountains and architecture now survive as the background was later re-gilded.⁸¹

Examination of the layer structure has revealed the existence of an original paint layer, plus two restoration layers complete with ground preparations. The painting technique used by the original artist was distinct from that used in the restoration layers in pigment choice, preparation and colour mix, making

⁷⁹ Shown by Raman spectroscopy to be based on a hematite containing red earth. See also, Bomford et al., *Art in the Making*, p. 21.

⁸⁰ SEM-EDX analysis of several fragments, carried out by Nigel Meeks of the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research of the British Museum, gave consistent results indicating a gold alloy with a mean value of c.93.4% Au, 4.0% Ag and 2.6% Cu (equivalent to around 22.4 carat).

⁸¹ See below, pp. 210–12.

it easy to distinguish the initial workmanship.⁸² The first paint medium could not be conclusively identified because of the complexity of the layer structure resulting from subsequent restoration campaigns.⁸³ Proteins, conifer resin and oils were found,⁸⁴ perhaps suggesting the use of a mixed egg and oil (*tempera grassa*) medium or the use of egg and oil in distinct layers. This technique was previously identified in a group of late fifteenth-century Florentine panels⁸⁵ and is suggested as that employed by the fifteenth-century Cretan painter Angelos,⁸⁶ and later by Damaskinos.⁸⁷ The use of oil would certainly have enhanced the glazing effect of the indigo and red lake in the composition. Darkening of the paint layer as a result of ageing of the oil would also explain the darkened look of the green trees and perhaps the change in appearance to the red lake glaze in the Virgin's robe.⁸⁸

The original palette consisted of lead white, gypsum, carbon black, red and yellow earths (coloured by goethite and hematite), basic copper carbonate,⁸⁹ verdigris, indigo, azurite, vermilion, red lead and a red lake.⁹⁰ All of these pigments, including the organic lakes, have been identified on Greek and Cretan icons from the fifteenth century⁹¹ and would have been available as a consequence of vigorous trade routes with Venice.⁹² The image was built up in layers, with simple paint mixes of two or three colours.

Selected areas of the painting were also studied in more detail. The flesh tones of the figures were painted with a yellow-green paint mix of yellow earths, verdigris and unidentified white pigment. Highlights of lead white were applied over this, with the addition of small amounts of vermilion for areas of warm flesh tones. A similar yellowish green paint mix was used for some of the background cliffs; here a lighter layer was applied first and then darker passages applied on top with the addition of azurite and carbon black to the paint mix. Traces of gold leaf found beneath the paint layer confirm

82 See below, *ibid.*

83 See below, *ibid.*

84 Paint media were identified using GC-MS by Rebecca Stacey of the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research of the British Museum.

85 J. Dunkerton and A Roy, 'The materials of a group of late fifteenth-century Florentine panel paintings', *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 17 (1996): pp. 20–31 (esp. p. 30).

86 Milanou et al., *Icons by the Hand of Angelos*, p. 40.

87 Moshos, 'The Conservation Work on the Michael Damaskinos Icons', p. 187.

88 It is also worth noting that the oil and resin mixture found may not be intentional and could be the result of the accidental migration of surface varnish layers as a consequence of cleaning and restoration.

89 This may be natural malachite, but the regular, small and spherical particles make the use of artificial green verditer more likely.

90 Pigments were identified using Raman spectroscopy, SEM-EDX and optical microscopy. Given the techniques available it was not possible to determine the organic colorant in the red lake.

91 Milanou, 'The techniques of post-Byzantine icons', pp. 5–6; Milanou et al., *Icons by the Hand of Angelos*, pp. 40–64.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 94, n. 43; Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer*, p. 183.

the use of the traditional practice of applying the background gilding before painting the image.⁹³ Often the gold leaf would encroach slightly on the area to be painted and this was then covered with subsequent paint layers.

A sample taken from the grey area of the robes of the angel pointing to heavens (far left, third level scene) was painted using a mix of carbon black, lead white and azurite with the darker folds added on top using only mixed lead white and carbon black. The angle's wings were first painted with red (a mix of vermilion, lead white and a red lake) and then edged with greenish wing tips of mixed basic copper carbonate and azurite, with white highlights painted on top. All the angels depicted in the icon are visually so similar it seems reasonable to assume they were painted with the same paint mixture.

In the scene of the 'Chairete' (second level, left side) the red drapery of the kneeling figure of the Virgin Mary is quite distinct from the other reds used in the image. This effect was produced using three paint layers: the first, of brownish red coloured with earths and carbon black, was coated with a second thin layer of semi-opaque red (mixed vermilion and red lake) and then coated with a third comparatively thick layer of a translucent red lake. This technique is typically post mid-fifteenth century and is distinct from earlier painting practice for the Virgin's robe.⁹⁴

After painting, mordant gilding was used to decorate Christ's cloth, his sandals and all of the angels' wings. The mordant, comprised of a sticky binder bulked out with inorganic pigment,⁹⁵ was applied to the painted surface and then coated with gold leaf, which was not burnished. The surface of the painting was then coated with a varnish containing a mix of oil and conifer resin, the remains of which were located in the paint cross-sections during analysis and confirmed during conservation.

Later Changes

At some point, possibly relatively soon after completion, the icon suffered extensive damage from wood boring insects probably attracted by the glue impregnated cloth layer acting as a food source. In general the damage was restricted to the uppermost surface of the panel, with only few areas of activity visible on the reverse.⁹⁶ The majority of the insect exit flight-holes came through the paint layer in localized areas around knots and faults in the wood and along every edge. As a result there were numerous holes on the painted

93 Bomford et al., *Art in the Making*, pp. 21–6.

94 Milanou et al., *Icons by the Hand of Angelos*, pp. 130, 92, n. 40 and p. 54.

95 The mordant (visible in cross section 2) could not be identified but was traditionally boiled oil; see Bomford et al., *Art in the Making*, pp. 43–7; Thompson, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, pp. 58–9.

96 The damage is revealed by radiography as tunnel shaped areas of low density.

surface and total loss of original paint, ground and cloth along the edges.

The icon was subsequently restored although the date of restoration is not known. The painted surface was cleaned to remove the original varnish, resulting in some damage to the initial paint (particularly the Virgin's red robe in the 'Chairete' scene), the gilded halos and the mordant gilding (Fig. 12.11). The lost edges were replaced with white ground layer and pigments bound in egg tempera (or possibly an egg/oil mix)⁹⁷

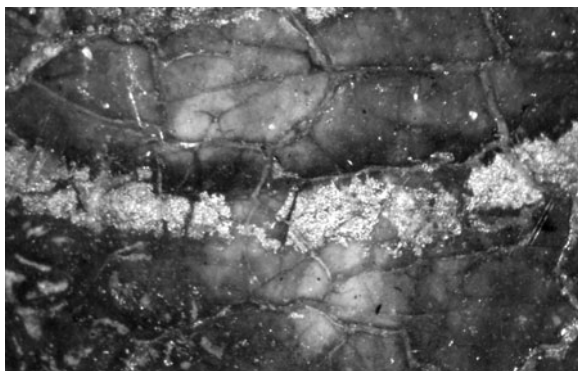


Fig. 12.11 Icon of the *Noli Me Tangere*, macro-photograph of mordant gilding of Christ's sandal strap showing loss of the original gold visible beneath the cracked and brittle restoration varnish (original image 12x9mm), British Museum, London (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

with an attempt made to complete the detail of the lost image. Curiously the restoration layer was not built up to the level of the original, but sat just below, forming a step around the edges. Some of the flight holes were also plugged with white fill and in-painted.⁹⁸ The early restoration palette included red lead, vermilion, indigo, ochres, a red lake and gypsum.⁹⁹ It differed from the original palette in the pigment mix and particle size and can be interpreted as being by a different hand. For example, restoration of the red coffin in the *Myrrhophori* scene originally painted in vermilion, was carried out in a mixture of red lead and a lake.¹⁰⁰

Larger areas of loss of original ground in the background were also replaced and the whole of the background was re-gilded. The profile of the background cliffs and architecture was re-painted and a black inscription was added on top of the gold on the right side between the mountains (fifth level). The original crosses were completely over-painted.¹⁰¹ Indigo paint, similar to that found covering areas of loss in the trees, was also found outlining areas of the profile of the mountains and the crosses. This was confirmed to be oil based.¹⁰² A thick oil and conifer resin varnish was then applied to the whole

97 Medium identification confirmed by GC-MS analysis, which also showed the presence of oil.

98 The 2006–2008 conservation campaign has revealed original paint surface beneath some of these plugs; see below, pp. 212–13.

99 Identified using Raman spectroscopy and optical microscopy.

100 These changes are also clearly visible in IR examination.

101 Prior to the 2006–2008 conservation campaign evidence of the original painted crosses was visible beneath lost over-paint.

102 GC-MS confirmed presence of conifer resin and oil.

surface including the restorations and the original paint.¹⁰³ This varnish later became oxidized, cracked and imbibed with dirt and began to flake off, taking paint with it.

A later – probably early twentieth-century – restoration campaign was also identified. This concentrated on the lower left edge and left side of the icon, but areas over most of the surface were also retouched. The losses were replaced with white, water soluble filler and in-painted with a palette of oil bound¹⁰⁴ post-eighteenth-century pigments, including vermilion¹⁰⁵ for the over painted red border and cadmium yellow and Prussian blue for the Magdalene's blue robe (originally painted in indigo and gypsum). This paint was applied directly on top of the older degrading oil and conifer varnish from the previous treatment and concealed areas of original paint and earlier restoration. Unlike the previous repairs, no attempt was made to recreate the lost parts, using instead simple blocks of colour to fill in the lost areas. A further, thinner, layer of oil and mastic resin varnish was then brushed over the whole surface. When the unstable later repairs on the left edge of the image were removed during the 2006–2008 conservation work,¹⁰⁶ traces of the earlier restoration were revealed beneath, matching those on the right side and including the step in the level. It would appear that the panel had lost most of the previously restored edge of the image, together with further areas of the original at the bottom and top corners and that this may be the reason for the later campaign.

During examination prior to the 2006–2008 conservation campaign, damage visible in the centre of the image (from the front and back) suggested the presence of an axial-directional crack through the centre of the panel. This was further confirmed by x-radiography, which also revealed its increasing depth and severity.¹⁰⁷ While the panel had remained fairly flat with only a minor twist from top to bottom, shrinkage and expansion of the panel was observed during the period of this examination.¹⁰⁸

Conservation Campaign 2006–2008

Assessment of the icon in 2005 showed active deterioration of both the original and restored parts and this, together with renewed interest in the piece, lead

¹⁰³ Identified by GC-MS.

¹⁰⁴ Identified by GC-MS.

¹⁰⁵ The small particles sizes suggested that the vermilion was produced using the wet process.

¹⁰⁶ See below, pp. 212–13.

¹⁰⁷ Electron emission radiography gave a particularly clear view of the panel damage and restoration of the painted surface.

¹⁰⁸ Observations of the behaviour of a large blister in the original painted surface (upper right of centre of the image) showed that it altered in height with changes in relative humidity.

to an interventive conservation campaign. This involved cleaning to remove the degraded surface coatings and elements of restoration considered most disruptive to the aesthetic appreciation of the image.¹⁰⁹ All the later restoration, together with areas of the earlier repairs where they covered original material and obscured study of the original surface was removed. The re-gilding was not removed, as the extent and condition of any surviving original gilding could not be determined, although IR and X-radiographic examination identified areas of surviving original ground. The added black inscription between the mountains in the fifth level scene was also retained. No original inscription could be distinguished beneath this one, but it is possible that one exists below the regilding. Cleaning revealed the fine quality of the original surface and confirmed that no signature was present. The removal of these restorations contributed greatly to the overall stability of the icon. Finally minor retouching was undertaken to reduce the impact of loss to the image and the surface was coated with a protective varnish (Fig. 12.1b).

Conclusions: The Reality of the Vision and the Message

Technical study has shown that the British Museum icon is complex and well made. Its production followed traditional practice for icon and early Italian panel painting. Identification of the materials and techniques employed has helped to strengthen a Cretan provenance. The painting technique and, to a certain extent, the panel preparation suggest the work of a master artisan. However, the under drawing technique may suggest the work of an apprentice or a painter less familiar with this subject.

Regardless of whether or not the British Museum icon was executed by the hand of the Cretan master as was the one housed in Herakleion, the two icons are representative examples of the art created for the cosmopolitan and multi-cultural environment on Crete containing elements that opened the way for the development of Byzantine art in the post-Byzantine period in different directions, adding new vision, new dimensions and appealing to a hybrid composite audience. They send a clear message regarding the ability Cretan painters developed in order to please their hybrid clientele, to combine Byzantine and western iconographic elements in their works without jarring notes. The abundance of sources of inspiration the painters had at their disposal, including engravings after Michelangelo and Flemish masters, and the uses they made of these sources, helped them to introduce innovations into the post-Byzantine artistic tradition, while at the same

109 Personal communication with Yannis Petsopoulos and Angeliki Lymberopoulou, 15 September 2006.

time linking them inextricably to the Western European movement of the Renaissance but without changing the fundamental and basic meaning of embedded spirituality that Byzantine icons carry.

Byzantine 'Visions' of the Ottoman Empire: Theories of Ottoman Legitimacy by Byzantine Scholars after the Fall of Constantinople

Konstantinos Moustakas

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 signified both the end of the Byzantine state, and the final realization of the enforcement of Ottoman rule over its former core lands and subjects. The new state of affairs naturally gave rise to ideological responses and, more generally, it prompted different reactions in those who identified themselves with the extinct Byzantine state, irrespective of whether or not they lived in Ottoman territory.

The ideological framework of Byzantine thinking in relation to the Ottoman rule can be characterized by three general trends. Firstly, there was the view of Ottoman rule as an illegitimate tyranny, imposed by infidels and by a foreign and barbaric power, which was, not surprisingly, promoted by Greeks living in Latin territories and migrants to the West. These ideas are best exemplified in the historical text of Doukas (c.1400–1462), written in Mytilini before 1462, and also in the core of the anti-Ottoman writings of scholars based in Italy who tried to promote a 'liberating' western crusade (cardinal Bessarion [1395–1472] can be cited as the most characteristic example).¹ Secondly, there was a theologically-based viewpoint that was founded on the policies of the reinstated Patriarchate of Constantinople, aptly demonstrated in the writings of Gennadios (c.1400–1472). According to that set of ideas, there was no denial of the illegitimate and tyrannical nature of Ottoman rule and of the vicious character of the new masters. These were, however, presented as divinely ordained in order to punish Christian sin; the faithful had to accept this by giving in to earthly hardships, which included their subjugation to the

1 See for instance, Bessarion's *General Address* (Ἐπιστολὴ Καθολικὴ) in PG 161:452.

infidel, yet at the same time keeping their faith and adhering to the Church.² Gennadios' stance in expressing these views can be explained not only because he held the position of the first Patriarch in Ottoman Constantinople (1454–56) and was the first to work towards securing the Orthodox Church within the Ottoman authorities, but also by his eschatological beliefs since he appears to have shared the views that the end of the world was imminent.³ Irrespective of whether or not these beliefs were set in an eschatological framework, the time and manner of the deliverance of the enslaved Christians was left to God. Consequently, the aforementioned ideological position was compatible with the process of consolidating the Ottoman rule over the conquered Christian population, indirectly authenticating the Ottoman political establishment.

Apart from these two major ideological positions, which despite their different viewpoints are both marked by a negative view of the Ottoman rule, an alternative model of thinking also appeared that reflected a positive stance towards the new state of affairs. These views were the least widespread and can be described as rather marginal, primarily because only a handful of writers expressed them. More precisely, these ideas can be found in the historical text of Kritovoulos (c.1410–*post* 1468), in some writings of George Amiroutzis (†c.1475), and to some extent in the *History* of Laonikos Chalkokondylis (1423–c.1490). The first two were present in Constantinople during the early years after its fall and there was some contact between them and the Ottoman ruling elite. In this respect, they constituted the alternative faction of Greek learning in Ottoman Constantinople, in addition to that associated with the Patriarchate.

The Byzantine ideological responses to the Ottoman takeover have been studied systematically however only insofar as particular Byzantine scholars are concerned.⁴ Some more generalized and synthetic approaches are limited to brief overviews, which nevertheless emphasize political positions rather

2 Gennadios' opinion on the Ottoman rule is best exemplified in his *Apologia de silentio ad Theodorum Branam*, where the condition of the Christians under Ottoman rule is generally depicted as miserable, the only consolation being the sultan's 'philanthropy' and the restoration of the Church: M. Jugie, L. Petit and X.A. Siderides (eds), *Ouvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios* (8 vols, Paris, 1935), vol. 4, pp. 265–6. For a detailed study of Gennadios' ideas: M.–H. Blanchet, *Georges–Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400–vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 2008), esp. pp. 107–35.

3 C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), p. 213; Blanchet, *Georges–Gennadios Scholarios*, pp. 128–33.

4 The most inclusive study on George Amiroutzis to have been published to date remains that by N.B. Tomadakis, 'Ετούρκευσεν ὁ Γεώργιος Ἀμιρούτζης', *Ἐπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 18 (1948): pp. 99–143. A systematic study is underway by Anna Frangedaki in her doctoral dissertation, executed in the University of Athens, Department of Philology. On Kritovoulos: D.R. Reinsch, 'Kritoboulos of Imbros – Learned Historian, Ottoman *Raya* and Byzantine Patriot', *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 40 (2003): pp. 297–311, and also the introductory chapters to his edition of Kritovoulos' *History: Critobuli Imbriotae Historia*, ed. D.R. Reinsch (Berlin and New York, 1983).

than theories and ideas.⁵ The perspective that is being analysed here, views on the legitimacy of Ottoman rule, is the least systematically studied and has not even been distinguished from other trends (e.g. the position of the patriarchal clergy after it was introduced by Gennadios). George Zoras, for instance, puts together Gennadios, Kritovoulos and Amiroutzis as the champions of collaboration with the new masters.⁶ To John Chasiotis, Gennadios, Kritovoulos and Amiroutzis belong, without great distinction, to a 'party' that supported the containment of the Ottoman Turks.⁷ In general, modern Greek historians who wrote about the scholars that concern us here, tended to focus on passing moral judgements on them in accordance with non-historically conceived national criteria, than actually discerning their theories. In this respect, Nikolaos Tomadakis shows a sympathetic view towards Amiroutzis and tries to excuse his infamous 'pro-Turkism' and his service to the sultan.⁸ Konstantinos Amantos suggests the presence or absence of 'noble' motives as lying behind the pro-Ottoman positions held by those individuals. Hence, Kritovoulos is believed to have adopted his position out of his interest for the well-being of his compatriots in the North Aegean islands, and is therefore accredited with noble incentives. However, no such justification could be found for Amiroutzis' attitude, who is, moreover, oddly enough blamed for his familial relation to Mahmud Paşa, an infamous slayer of Greeks in Amantos' reconstruction.⁹ Chasiotis does find some positive reasoning in the actions of Gennadios and later patriarchs, but Kritovoulos and Amiroutzis are simply disdained as opportunists who are to be held in low esteem.¹⁰

The present study aims to overcome the general neglect of the various viewpoints regarding the legitimacy of the Ottoman rule as articulated by Byzantine scholars, by contributing a brief but as inclusive as possible study of their theories. The selection of individual scholars included in this study

5 Such overviews appear in brief synthetic articles, biographies of particular authors, introductions to editions or commentaries on texts such as K. Amantos, 'Η Ἀλώσις τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως', in *Η πεντακοσιοστὴ ἐπέτειος ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλώσεως τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως* (Athens, 1953), pp. 9–10; G.T. Zoras, *Γεώργιος ὁ Τραπεζούντιος καὶ αἱ πρὸς ἐλληνοτουρκικὴν συνεννόησιν προσπάθειαι αὐτοῦ* (*Η Περὶ τῆς Χριστιανῶν Πίστειος ἀνέκδοτος πραγματεία*) (Athens, 1954), pp. 17–74; N.B. Tomadakis, *Δούκα – Κριτοβούλου – Σφραντζῆ – Χαλκοκονδύλη, Περὶ Ἀλώσεως τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1453)* (2nd ed., Athens, 1969), with introductory chapters on the four 'Historians of the Fall'; J. Chasiotis, 'Η στάση τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀπέναντι στοὺς ξένους κυριάρχους. Τάσεις συνεργασίας Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ὀθωμανῶν', in *Ιστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους* (16 vols, Athens, 1974), vol. 10, pp. 246–9. Most of the relevant studies by Greek scholars appeared in the 1950's on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the fall of Constantinople.

6 Zoras, *Τραπεζούντιος*, pp. 49–57, 65–8.

7 Chasiotis, 'Η στάση τῶν Ἑλλήνων', pp. 247–9.

8 Tomadakis, 'Ἀμιρούτζης', pp. 122–4, 140–43.

9 Amantos, 'Η Ἀλώσις', pp. 9–10. Such a view on Mahmud Paşa can be contrasted by the information provided by Sphrantzis about the Mpochalis family, which Mahmud Paşa saved from execution: V. Grecu (ed.), *Georgios Sphrantzes Memorii 1401–1477. În anexă Pseudo-Phrantzes: Macarie Melissenos Cronica 1258–1481* (Bucarest, 1966), p. 120.

10 Chasiotis, 'Η στάση τῶν Ἑλλήνων', p. 248.

is based on their identification as Byzantine, i.e. as subjects of the Byzantine emperor through their birth or residence in areas under his direct control or in the peripheral Byzantine outposts (the Despotate of the Morea, Trebizond). Moreover, their identification as Byzantine is also based on their own self-perception as belonging to the world of Byzantium in the broader sense that is in terms of origin, political loyalties and culture.¹¹

The emotional impact of the fall of Constantinople on those who associated themselves with Byzantium was so strong as to contribute to a widely held pessimism, a realization of the definite collapse of the Palaiologan house, and an uncertainty towards the possibility of a future revival of the 'Roman Empire'. In contrast to 1204, there was no pretense that the empire could be kept alive in exile. Any hope for its reinstatement in the near or distant future was left to the supernatural, expressed in the form of prophecies and oracles, or it was expected to be realized through the actions of the western powers. In this respect, many Byzantines would have been satisfied to be subjects of a Latin ruler who would have driven the Ottomans away from Constantinople, as is demonstrated in Michael Apostolis' (1422–80) letter to the German emperor Frederick III (r. 1440–93).¹² Since the possibility of foreign rule was not unthinkable, an alternative position did not object to the Ottoman takeover, the more so as it simply acknowledged reality.

The legitimacy of the Ottoman authority, as expressed by Byzantine thinkers, is explored from the perspective of a novel political theory responding to the circumstances of the collapse of the Byzantine state and the imposition of a foreign power over its former subjects, that was not of the same faith. Needless to say, none among these thinkers claimed that the Ottoman state could be identified with the former Byzantine one. The ideological foundations of the Byzantine state were so deeply immersed in theological ideas that they were naturally incompatible with the rule of a power that differed so dramatically in terms of religion. The Ottoman Empire was regarded by all means as a distinct political entity that could only be thought as sharing some of the symbolic features that pertained to the Byzantine political establishment. In this respect, it could be represented as a successor of Byzantium in the sense of the legitimate authority that it was able to establish over the former Byzantine subjects. For all these reasons the Byzantine advocates of Ottoman legitimacy did not rely much on Byzantine models in order to articulate their theories. Quite a few among their themes that actually reflect the influence of Byzantine political theory concern the designation of the sultan as *basileus*,

11 George of Trebizond (1395–1486), the Greco-Italian scholar who occasionally adopted a pro-ottoman position after 1453 and developed a theory on the legitimacy of Ottoman rule (see below, n. 19), hardly meets any of these criteria. Therefore, he is not included in this study.

12 B. Laourdas, 'Η πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Φρειδερίκον τὸν Τρίτον ἐπὶ κλήσις τοῦ Μιχαὴλ Ἀποστόλη', in *Γέρας Α. Κεραμοπούλλου* (Athens, 1953), pp. 516–27.

as well as the theme of divine sanction as applying to Ottoman rule. Hence, it may not be inappropriate to regard these theories as giving a 'Byzantine meaning' in the Ottoman Empire, an expression that can be justified firstly by the identification of these scholars, who while being Byzantine they provided theoretical foundations to the Ottoman rule; secondly by the very idea of Ottoman legitimacy they advocate; and thirdly by the few Byzantine theoretical models they adapt to the new state of affairs.

Before discussing the themes, it is necessary to briefly present the authors and their texts in order to establish the individual positions of those who expressed such ideas, to discern their motives, and to relate their views not only to their personal circumstances but also to the wider historic context. The final question that will be considered is whether those views were simply personal expressions (e.g. self-serving flattery of the sultan) or whether they reflected a political agenda in the sense of either the promotion of group interests or the diffusion of a pro-Ottoman ideology among the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

The most cohesive and extensive account of a theory on the legitimacy of Ottoman authority is offered by Kritovoulos in his historical text, together with its accompanying letter addressed to the sultan. Kritovoulos' *History* can be described as an Ottoman history written in Greek. If that text was to be classified according to the norms of Byzantine historiography, it would be assigned to the model of historical writing that focused on the person and reign of a particular emperor, treated in favourable terms. Thus it would be possible to regard it as similar in concept to older Byzantine examples such as the *Alexiad* or John Kinnamos' (c.1143–1203) history of Manuel I Komnenos (r.1143–80).¹³ However, Kritovoulos does not appear to have relied on Byzantine models for his writings, but he was rather inspired by classical historical texts such as Arrian's *Anabasis*.¹⁴

George Amiroutzis' views regarding the legitimacy of Ottoman rule are less revealing due to the limited number of relevant texts that survive. This is highly unfortunate since he was the most closely associated with the sultan amongst the scholars that concern us here. Some rudimentary evidence of his depictions of Ottoman rule can be identified in some of the poems he composed for Mehmed II (r.1444–45, 1451–81), whereas his letter to Cardinal

13 *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, eds D.R. Reinsch and A. Kambylis (Berlin and New York, 2001); *Ioannis Cinnami Epitome*, ed. A. Meineke (Bonn, 1836). This is in contrast to texts that covered a longer period and adopted a critical stance towards some of the emperors, e.g. Michael Psellos' *Chronography* or Niketas Choniatis' *Histories*: *Michel Psellos Chronographie*, ed. E. Renauld (2 vols, Paris, 1926–28); *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten (Berlin and New York, 1975).

14 Kritovoulos' work is also much influenced by Thucydides, especially in the areas of language and style. Reinsch, 'Kritoboulos', pp. 303–6. The author himself cites Herodotos and Josephus as sources of information and/or inspiration. Kritovoulos, I 3.8, 4.2: *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, p. 15.

Bessarion offers insight into the evolving idea of the perception of the conquest as turning from a misfortune into the *fait accompli* of a legitimate rule.

The principal idea which helped to establish the notion of Ottoman legitimacy among these scholars is centered on the sultan's designation as *basileus* (βασιλεὺς). In the case of Amiroutzis this can be linked to the concept of a 'right of conquest' with reference to the Ottoman possession of the imperial city of Constantinople. Kritovoulos, however, presents a different view, according to which the imperial rights of the Ottoman house, and the consequent rights to imperial dignities, were much more deeply rooted and related to their distant origins.

The term *basileus* did have strong ideological connotations, which apart from the old Byzantine concept of the divinely sanctioned and ecumenical ruler, it generally signified the legitimate sovereign. In the early fifth century, Synesios of Cyrene gave an explicit early example of the long and pertinent Byzantine tradition that distinguished between the *basileus* and the tyrant.¹⁵ Even though the Byzantine distinction between the two gave special emphasis to the concept of adherence to the 'law', the two terms can be regarded as opposite in a more general way, on the one hand pertaining to a legitimate and properly founded authority, and on the other to an arbitrary, violent and oppressive rule. Several Byzantine scholars writing after 1453, such as Doukas and Bessarion, described the Ottoman rule as a tyranny congruent with those concepts, while the authors that interest us here attribute the title of *basileus* to the sultan.¹⁶

A distinction has been noted earlier between Amiroutzis and Kritovoulos insofar as their attribution of the imperial title to the Ottoman sultan is concerned. The former specifically related the title of *basileus* to Mehmed II, while the latter uses the title in reference to the previous rulers of the Ottoman house as well.¹⁷ Amiroutzis' attitude may simply be a coincidence; since his texts concern the reigning sultan, he saw no reason to discuss any of his predecessors. His view that justified the sultan's entitlement to the imperial dignity appears to be associated with the conquest of Constantinople. This is explicitly stated in his letter to Cardinal Bessarion, which must have been written soon after the Ottoman capture of Trebizond in 1461, since the author, who presents himself as forcibly resettled to Edirne, describes to his correspondent the course of major events relating to Trebizond's conquest. In Amiroutzis' terms, Mehmed II had already become the *basileus* of 'Greeks and

15 Synesios of Cyrene: *Synesii Cyrenensis Opuscula*, ed. N. Terzaghi (Rome, 1944), pp. 5–62 (*Oratio de Regno VI*).

16 In doing so, they can be contrasted with Gennadios, who never attributed the title of *basileus* to the sultan: Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios*, p. 107.

17 'καὶ τελευτᾷ τὸν βίον Μωράτης ὁ βασιλεὺς ... τοῦ λαμπροτάτου γένους ὧν Ἀτουμάνω ἔκτος αὐτὸς εὐγενὴς ἐξ εὐγενῶν'. Kritovoulos I 4.1: *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, p. 15.

Romans' before he launched his campaign against Trebizond,¹⁸ an expression clearly pointing out the circumstances that allowed the Ottoman ruler to be viewed in such a way, basically the capture of Constantinople. Even though in that letter Amiroutzis appears to regard the Ottoman conquest as a misfortune for the people, as well as for himself and his family, he appears eager to admit to the legitimacy of the sultan's rule by describing him accordingly.

Behind Amiroutzis' expressions it is possible to discern a symbolic role assigned to Constantinople, one conveying an inherent right of dominance to its holder.¹⁹ The symbolic essence of the Byzantine capital as a source of authority apparently contributed to the articulation of political concepts concerned with the new state of affairs after the Ottoman conquest. During the Latin occupation of Constantinople (1204–61), the dominant ideas that were shared by more or less all Byzantines were that the existence of a 'Roman' state was unthinkable if it was deprived of its capital, that the *raison d'être* of the successor states was to retake the imperial capital from its captors, and that no authority exercised from Constantinople could be recognized unless it was identified with a Byzantine emperor.²⁰ Under Ottoman rule, however, some group of individuals of Byzantine origins expressed a willingness to recognize some legitimacy to whoever was in possession of the city irrespective of their origins and religion.²¹

Certainly, the concept of a 'right of conquest' needed to be elaborated and justified further by its exponents so that it could provide a sound theory of legitimacy. In this respect, the fragments of Amiroutzis that allow us to discern a theory authenticating the Ottoman rule, point to a viewpoint based on secular notions. In one of the poems he wrote for the sultan, Amiroutzis puts forward the comparison of his master with Alexander the Great. Earlier Byzantine court-scholars often used to parallel their emperors with Alexander

18 'ὁ γὰρ τοῖνον μέγα δυνάμενος καὶ πλείστων καὶ μεγίστων ἔθνων ἄρχων, Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων ἤδη βασιλεὺς ...'. J.F. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regis* (5 vols, Paris, 1833), vol. 5, p. 390.

19 This idea is explicitly stated by George of Trebizond, who relates the Ottoman possession of Constantinople with a right of world dominance as well as with imperial dignities. His theory of Ottoman legitimacy relied on the anticipation of the sultan's forthcoming conversion to Christianity for which the author appeared to have been convinced of. George of Trebizond's theory is fully developed in his *On the Eternal Glory of the Autocrat* (1466): J. Monfassani (ed.), *Collectanea Trapezuntiana. Texts, Documents and Bibliographies of George of Trebizond* (Binghamton New York, 1984), pp. 493–6, 528–31.

20 H. Glykatzis-Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1975), pp. 103–28; A. Stauridou-Zaphraka, *Νίκαια καὶ Ἡπειρος τον 13ο αἰώνα. Ἰδεολογικὴ ἀντιπαράθεση στὴν προσπάθεια τοὺς νὰ ἀνακτήσουν τὴν αὐτοκρατορία* (Thessaloniki, 1990), pp. 199–203, 212–18; D. Angelon, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 98–100, 103–4, 114; H. Giarenis, *Η συγκρότηση καὶ ἡ ἐδραίωση τῆς Αυτοκρατορίας τῆς Νίκαιας. Ο αὐτοκράτορας Θεόδωρος Α΄ Κομνηνὸς Λάσκαρις* (Athens, 2008), pp. 291, 296–9.

21 This reasoning can be discerned in sixteenth-century chronicles produced by associates of the Patriarchate.

making him an ideal model for the Byzantine emperors.²² It is plausible to suppose that Amiroutzis was familiar with this tradition, the more so due to his service in the court of the Grand Komnenoi of Trebizond, whose self-styling as 'Emperors of the Whole East' obviously harks back to Alexander.²³ Furthermore, Amiroutzis' comparison suited Mehmed II's own pretensions, since the latter is known to have been paralleling himself with Alexander,²⁴ and clearly demonstrates the former's intentions of flattering the sultan. Amiroutzis' parallelism developed into a legitimacy theory of the Ottoman rule, founded on the principle of equality, as it related to the supposed intention of the sultan to treat all of his subjects on equal terms and to make no discrimination between his own people and the conquered, similarly to what was known of Alexander.²⁵

In contrast to Amiroutzis, whose ideas on Ottoman authority can be reconstructed from brief isolated references, Kritovoulos has produced a cohesive historical text, which includes an explicit development of his ideas, or otherwise allows his implicit relevant points to be deduced. His justification of the Ottoman rule is based on more than one element, with the metaphysical or theological aspect occupying only a marginal position in his reasoning. In few cases, Kritovoulos repeats a statement about the divine approval that marked some of the historical facts.²⁶ Moreover, his metaphysical allusions derive from his references to the omens and portents that appeared when Mehmed II ascended the Ottoman throne, as well as during the siege of Constantinople.²⁷ Behind those lines the contemporary reader could see a divine approval regarding Mehmed's rise to the highest imperial power as well as the doom of Byzantium. Beyond those theological implications, Kritovoulos' key views were based on secular ideas, starting with his assertion of the temporality of states and empires. Kritovoulos agrees with the conception of history as a succession of world-empires, placing his contemporary Ottoman as the next in line after the collapse of the Roman, as well as to the schema of *translatio*

22 For several examples referring to the Laskarids and the early Palaiologoi: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, pp. 79, 85–91.

23 In the Trapezuntine context, examples of parallelism with Alexander are provided in Constantine Loukitis' funeral discourse on Alexios II Grand Komnenos and also in some versed praises for Alexios III Grand Komnenos by Stephen Sgouropoulos. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς Σταχυολογίας* (5 vols, St. Petersburg, 1891), vol. 1, pp. 427, 432.

24 F. Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 410, 494, 500.

25 '... πέφηνας ὡς ἀριστεύς καὶ Ἑλλήνων βασιλεὺς. Πῶς ἀλλότρια τὰ σοῦ, πῶς οὖν ξένα τὰ σαυτοῦ; Εἰς δουλείας τὸν ζυγὸν οὕτω πέρας ἀγαγὼν ἔκρινεν ὡς παῖς ἐμὸς. Ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος οὐμὸς ἐποίητο ἴδια καὶ τὰ τῶν Περσῶν καλὰ.' S.P. Lampros, 'Ποιήματα Γεωργίου τοῦ Ἀμοιρούτζη νῦν τὸ πρῶτον ἐκδιδόμενα', *Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Ἐθνολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας τῆς Ἑλλάδος* 2 (1885): p. 280.

26 The facts that Kritovoulos attributes to the will of God (θεοῦ θελήματι) include the rise of Mehmed II to power, the fall of Constantinople, and the reinstatement of the patriarchate by the sultan. Kritovoulos *Epistula*, I 70.1, II 2.2: *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, pp. 3, 80, 91.

27 Kritovoulos I 4.4, I 17.6–7: *ibid.*, pp. 16, 37.

imperii.²⁸ For him, this process is not left to some inexplicable force of nature, but could be interpreted in empirical terms as being conditional to the qualities of leadership.²⁹ As a consequence, Byzantium's decline is the result of the failures of its ruling groups, while the majority of the people and in exceptional cases some of its leaders – such as the last emperor Constantine XI (r.1449–53) – were not to be held responsible.³⁰ In contrast, the Ottoman Empire rose due to the excellent qualities of its own leaders, with Mehmed II being the shining example.

By developing his theory on the relativity of the fortunes of state and empire, Kritovoulos provides an explanation for the fall of Byzantium and the rise of the Ottomans, yet this could not be sufficient so as to advance a legitimizing concept. This goal is probably achieved by Kritovoulos' assertion of the supposed Hellenic origins of the Ottoman house, as he presents an imaginary account of the origins of the Osmanlis, who are shown to be descendants of the Achaemenids.³¹ In doing so, Kritovoulos not only adheres to the commonly held identification of the Turks as Persians, which had become a literary convention among Byzantine scholars that fitted their antiquarian fashions, he even presents that tradition to be factually confirmed. Through their supposed Achaemenid connection, the Osmanlis are placed within a most noble and dignified ruling house, which allowed them to be accorded the title of *basileus* already from the founding of the dynasty and irrespective of whether they had possession of Constantinople. Moreover, they are supposed to have been of Greek stock, which Kritovoulos bases on Herodotos, by having the Achaemenids and other noble families of ancient Persia to descent from Perseus and another Greek mythical hero, Achaemenis.³² In brief, by being Greeks themselves the Ottoman sultans were rightfully entitled to rule Greek people, while the matter of different religion is avoided.

The texts of Kritovoulos are full of praise for Mehmed II, especially in his capacity as military leader and statesman, but also for his support to the Orthodox Church and his appreciation of Gennadios.³³ Yet, these depictions of the sultan do not seem to reflect Byzantine models concerning the ideal features of the emperor. This confirms the observation of the general incompatibility of these theories on Ottoman legitimacy with Byzantine

28 Kritovoulos I 3.3–5: *ibid.*, p. 14.

29 This interpretation contradicts to some extent those put forward by D.R. Reinsch and J. Harris, who regard Kritovoulos' idea on the relativity of the fortune of states as depending on 'nature', historical laws or blind fate. Reinsch, 'Kritovoulos', p. 306; J. Harris, 'Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the Rise of the Ottoman Turks', *BMGS* 27 (2003): pp. 154–5. In my opinion, it could be argued that Kritovoulos, by stressing the qualities of leadership, considered the human factor as primary for historical interpretation.

30 Kritovoulos I 3.7: *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, pp. 14–15.

31 Kritovoulos I 4.2: *ibid.*, p. 15.

32 Kritovoulos I 4.2: *ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

33 Kritovoulos II 2: *ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

models. A Byzantine influence can, however, be detected in the special emphasis paid by Kritovoulos to the sultan's portrayal as a friend and supporter of learning and scholarship, including his supposed interest in the classical letters, more precisely aristotelism and stoic philosophy which he is presented to have mastered through their Arabic and Persian translations.³⁴ Nevertheless, several other features of the ideal Byzantine emperor, such as prudence, timidity, commitment to justice, philanthropy, are absent from Kritovoulos' portrayal of Mehmed II, yet present in his praise of Constantine XI Palaiologos, for whom the historian adheres to the Byzantine tradition concerning the emperor's ideal image.³⁵

Laonikos Chalkokondylis differs from the other two scholars insofar as the general concept of his work is not pro-ottoman. In treating the history of the Ottomans, he tries to be impartial, which could be reflecting an influence from classical models of historical writing. In any event his narration is respectful toward the Ottomans, which in itself could be attributed to the imitation of his principal archetype, Herodotos, in the way the latter had treated the Achaemenid Persians. Like Kritovoulos and Amiroutzis, Chalkokondylis too consistently uses the term *basileus* as a reference to the Ottoman sultan. Nevertheless, in congruence with his general radicalism (in the sense of his distancing from traditional and fundamental aspects of the Byzantine ideology) he does not seem to employ the term in the traditional Byzantine sense with the ideological connotations and the symbolism it conveyed.³⁶ Instead he seems to apply the title of *basileus* in a descriptive and ideologically neutral way, since he uses it to characterize several different rulers.³⁷ In this respect, the Byzantine emperor is always described as 'king of the Greeks' (Ἑλλήνων βασιλεύς), whereas the Ottoman sultan is sometimes described as 'king of the Turks' and usually as simply the *basileus* (king or emperor). The last point may be indicative of the author's special appreciation of the Ottoman authority as compared with several other rulerships of the day. By not attributing any specifications to the title of *basileus* when addressing it to the Ottoman sultan, it could be suggested to have actually been presenting

34 Kritovoulos I 4.2: *ibid.*, p. 17.

35 Kritovoulos I 72: *ibid.*, pp. 81–2. On the emphasis on the ideal royal attributes of erudition and dedication to the common good in fifteenth-century Byzantium: T. Kiousopoulou, *Βασιλεύς ή Οικονόμος; Πολιτική εξουσία και ιδεολογία πριν την Άλωση* (Athens, 2007), pp. 196–200.

36 Harris, 'Laonikos Chalkokondyles', p. 158, observes Chalkokondylis' distancing from Byzantine political traditions in his designation of the Byzantines as Hellenes instead of Romans.

37 For example the kings of the Franks, those of England, Castile, Serbia, Timur Leng. Chalkokondylis: *Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. E. Darkó (2 vols, Budapest, 1922), vol. 1, pp. 23, 26, 52, 69, 81. Nerio Acciaiuoli of Athens is the sole ruler whom Chalkokondylis designates as a tyrant, the basis of which lies on the persecution of the historian's family by that ruler. *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 91, 92, 94, 112.

the sultan as his ruler. Moreover, since Chalkokondylis acknowledges that the Ottomans have become masters of his fellow-countrymen, by not expressing any personal disapproval it could be assumed that, at least indirectly, he provides a basic legitimacy to the Ottoman rule.

In their studies of Chalkokondylis, both Nikolaos Nikoloudis and Jonathan Harris propose interpretations of the author's fairness and objectivity towards the Ottomans. According to the former's interpretation of Chalkokondylis, the promising outlook of Greek culture, as exposed in his comment on the strength and spread of the Greek language, compensated for the political collapse of contemporary Hellenism, fueled the author's confidence, and allowed him to be courteous to the Ottomans as to adopt an objective position in narrating their history.³⁸ Harris attributes the position of Chalkokondylis towards the Ottomans to his general conception of history, which ascribed the rising of peoples and dynasties to a combined agency of virtue and fortune, a reflection of Cicero and Livy's theories with which Chalkokondylis was familiar through contemporary Italian scholarship.³⁹ In this respect, his fairness to the Ottomans is explained by his appreciation of their virtue and his recognition of the inevitability about their rising to power. However, neither interpretation relates Chalkokondylis' treatment of the Ottomans with any allusions to a particular theory of legitimacy on his behalf. Nevertheless, such a theory probably exists and it is perhaps possible to extract it from his statements.

Chalkokondylis' views can be reconstructed by combining some of his assertions as presented in the introduction of his *Demonstrations of Histories*. Adhering to the notions of Hellenicity, the author sees the major historic advantage of the Greek nation in the strength of Greek culture and this is demonstrated by his statement regarding the vivacity, spread, and general respect paid to the Greek language. This declaration is followed by his prediction of the future revival of a Greek kingdom.⁴⁰ Probably the sequence of the two statements is not coincidental but it may be more meaningful than it seems in the first place and revealing of the author's deeper thoughts. In a following passage, Chalkokondylis describes and explains the emergence of Byzantium as the 'hellenization' of the Roman Empire in the East after Constantine I (r.324–37) moved the imperial seat into a Greek milieu. This process is explicitly explained as an outcome of the 'hellenization' (in terms of language, culture etc.) of those Romans who moved East.⁴¹ Considering

38 N. Nikoloudis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles. A Translation and Commentary of the 'Demonstrations of Histories' (Books I–III)* (Athens, 1996), p. 61.

39 Harris, 'Laonikos Chalkokondyles', pp. 163–8.

40 '... ὡς ἑλληνικὴ φωνὴ ταῦτα διέξιμεν, ἐπεὶ ἢ γε τῶν Ἑλλήνων φωνὴ πολλὰ ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην δίοσπαρται καὶ συχναῖς ἐγκαταμέμικται. καὶ κλέος μὲν αὐτῇ μέγα τὸ παραυτίκα, μείζον δὲ καὶ ἐς αὔθις, ὅποτε δὴ ἀνὰ βασιλείαν οὐ φαύλην Ἑλλήν τε αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐσόμενοι βασιλεῖς,' Chalkokondylis: *Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, vol. 1, p. 2.

41 '... ἔς ὃ δὴ Ῥωμαίους ... ἐπιτρέψαντες Ῥώμῃν τῷ μεγίστῳ αὐτῶν ἀρχιερεῖ καὶ διαβάντες ἐς Θράκην, ὑφηγομένου ἐπὶ τὰδε τοῦ βασιλέως, ... Βυζάντιον ἑλληνίδα πόλιν μητρόπολιν σφῶν

his acknowledgment of that historic precedent with the possibly deliberate combination of his two previous statements, as cited above, we may interpret Chalkokondylis as expecting a future 'hellenization' of the Ottoman Empire as well. In proposing this, we have also to take into account the fact that contemporary discussions about the rising of Ottoman power and the prospects of the Ottoman Empire, that took place in Italy, included the expectation of a forthcoming conversion of the Ottomans to Christianity based on a current of quite popular prophecies circulating then.⁴² If the present interpretation of Chalkokondylis is correct, his view can be related to that trend, as an alternative version drawn not on a religious but on a secular perspective. Furthermore, his implicit ideas, as they are supposed here, can be regarded as a theory of Ottoman legitimacy, which is founded on an imaginary association of the Ottomans with 'Greekness', similarly to the one outlined by Kritovoulos. The difference is that while the latter's association lay in the past, in the imaginary distant origins of the Ottoman house, the former's is placed in the future.

A proper understanding of the positions adopted by these three scholars with their views and theories of the Ottoman rule as legitimate, requires an investigation of their probable motives, focusing on the existence or absence of political motivations on their part. The kind of a political agenda that is of concern in this study was set earlier as the promotion of group interests or the propagation of submission to the Ottoman rule among the formerly Byzantine subjects of the empire.⁴³ In this respect, since his writings were most probably addressed to the Italian and Greek scholarly communities of Italy and not to groups associated with the Ottoman court or to the Greek subjects of the Ottoman Empire, Chalkokondylis requires no further discussion. Insofar as Amiroutzis is concerned, based on the few samples of his writings that relate to the issue of Ottoman legitimacy, his views can only be looked at as expressing personal opinions and self-serving interest. His early view of the Ottoman rule as a legitimate authority, evident in his description of the sultan as the '*basileus* of Greeks and Romans', is only revealed in his correspondence with Cardinal Bessarion and there is no further evidence to show whether he propagated this view in general. Thereafter, his versed praises to the sultan clearly established a justification of Ottoman rule. Primarily, however, Amiroutzis' aim was to

ἀποδεικνύοντας, ... "Ελληνας τε τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῦ ἐπιμιγνύοντας, γλώτταν μὲν καὶ ἦθη διὰ τὸ πολλῶ πλέονας Ῥωμαίων Ἑλληνας αὐτοῦ ἐπικρατεῖν διὰ τέλους φυλάξαι, τοῦνομα μέντοι μηκέτι κατὰ τὸ πάτριον καλουμένου ἀλλάξασθαι ...' Chalkokondylis: *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 4. For comments on Chalkokondylis' idea about the hellenization of the Romans: P. Gounaridis, *Γένος Ῥωμαίων: Βυζαντινές καὶ νεοελληνικές ἐρμηνείες* (Athens, 1996), pp. 19–20; Nikoloudis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles*, pp. 59–60.

42 The exponents of this view include George of Trebizond, Francesco Filelfo, Pope Pius II. G. Tognetti, 'Venezia e le profezie sulla conversione dei Turchi', in *Venezia e i Turchi* (Milan, 1985), pp. 86–143; also see above, n. 19.

43 See above, pp. 218–19.

flatter Mehmed II and to draw attention to his own intellectual qualities which probably established his association with the sultan.

Among the known Christian figures associated with Mehmed II, Amiroutzis was one of the most influential, though it is not known that he actually used his power for political purposes. His one known political act during his association with the sultan, namely the deposition of patriarch Joasaph I (1463–65), only occurred as a result of a personal feud. He served the sultan as a court scholar, and in this way he created a place for himself within the new state of affairs, however removed from what can be characterized as 'high politics' (i.e. some role or participation in governmental decision making).

In contrast to Amiroutzis, Kritovoulos appears to have played a quite significant role in contemporary politics, and based on his own testimony he had offered important services to the Ottomans. More precisely, he presented himself as having convinced his compatriots of Imbros to side with the Ottomans instead of the Latins when news came of the fall of Constantinople and the imminent campaign of the Ottoman fleet in the north Aegean. Then he played an active role in the operations that put Lemnos under Ottoman control in 1456, and finally he was entrusted with the administration of his native Imbros on behalf of the despot Demetrios Palaiologos (†1470) under Ottoman suzerainty, an office he probably held for ten years, until the Venetian capture of the island in 1466.⁴⁴ It was only then that he settled in Constantinople, where he completed his *History* and presented it as a gift to the sultan. His whereabouts in the new Ottoman capital are obscure and he finally disappeared from the scene after 1468. He was associated with scholars such as Amiroutzis and Theodore Agallianos (bishop of Medeia [1468–*ante* 1474] and one of Gennadios' associates),⁴⁵ and it is quite probable that he was in some way associated with the sultanic court. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Kritovoulos held either a scholarly or, more importantly, a prominent political and/or administrative position within this court.

Kritovoulos' *History* seems to have been written in a political perspective. It was dedicated to Mehmed II, but its author expected it to be widely read. This is explicitly stated in the accompanying dedicatory letter, in which Kritovoulos assures the sultan of the great service he would be offered by the *History*, since it was to be read by Greeks as well as by Italians.⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, Kritovoulos expected the *History* to be read by his once Byzantine compatriots; therefore his work could probably be identified as a vehicle for the diffusion of his ideas on legitimacy among the conquered subjects of the sultan. The sympathy

44 Kritovoulos describes on several occasions his own political actions in the islands between 1453 and 1466: Kritovoulos I 75.4–5, II 16.1–2, II 23.1–6, III 14.1–8, III 15.1–3, III 18: *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, pp. 86–7, 107, 115–16, 133–6, 140. Also see Reinsch, 'Kritoboulos', pp. 300–301.

45 Ibid., p. 301.

46 Kritovoulos, *Epistula* 2–3: *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, pp. 4–5.

shown by Kritovoulos towards the sufferings of the people of Constantinople when describing the events of the fall is probably explained by these political objectives, together with his concern not to alienate his compatriots, and it could be argued that he was not simply portraying a sense of solidarity and Byzantine patriotism.⁴⁷ More precisely, by ascribing the responsibility for the misfortunes that befell the empire solely on Byzantine leadership and explicitly exonerating the *people*,⁴⁸ it could be suggested he was hoping his ideas would be positively received by the conquered Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, thus advancing his justification and legitimacy of Ottoman rule among them. Probably with the same objective in mind he presented the last emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos in a positive light by praising him for his dignity and heroism, and for being a man of virtue, probably in anticipation of the respect he enjoyed among the people of Byzantine origins after the fall.

Kritovoulos' subsequent fall into obscurity and his failure to gain the rewards he expected are indicative that his work was neither reproduced and read as widely as he expected it to be, nor that the sultan himself showed any enthusiasm for it.⁴⁹ It is possible that Mehmed II's indifference towards Kritovoulos and his works was related to his general political attitudes, especially towards his Christian subjects. The sultan is known to have relied heavily on converts to Islam, for manning his administration but not so when it came to Christians. At one time, directly after the conquest of Constantinople, he had flirted with the idea of taking several Byzantine notables into his service, but the reaction of his Ottoman dignitaries and the following execution of those Byzantine captives put an end to that prospect.⁵⁰

47 In Reinsch's account, the sympathy shown by Kritovoulos to the victims of the sack of Constantinople is explained simply as a mark of Byzantine patriotism without political motivations. Reinsch, 'Kritoboulos', pp. 307–8.

48 Kritovoulos I 3.7: *ibid.*, pp. 14–15. See above, nn. 29, 30.

49 It has been suggested that Mehmed II was indifferent to literary laudations: Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*, pp. 469, 471.

50 E.A. Zachariadou, 'Τα λόγια και ο θάνατος του Λουκά Νοταρά' in C. Maltezos, Th. Detorakis and Ch. Charalampakis (eds), *Ροδωνιά. Τιμή στον Μ.Ι. Μανούσκα* (2 vols, Rethymno, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 136–46. Some Christians such as Amiroutzis or Mara Branković, bore some influence with the sultan throughout his reign, however these figures did not actually hold any important administrative position. A few exceptional cases are known of Christians who held an administrative function of some importance, though not in the higher ranks, but they remain rather obscure figures in history. These can be identified as men who were in the service of the Ottomans already before 1453, such as Thomas Katabolenos and Demetrios Kyritzis Apokaoukos, who served as secretaries to the sultan, and Nikolaos Isidoros, a tax farmer. Representatives of that group are known to have exercised some influence on Mehmed II's decision to reinstate the Patriarchate and to appoint Gennadios as Patriarch: E.A. Zachariadou, 'Les notables laïques et le patriarchat oecuménique après la chute de Constantinople', *Turcica* 30 (1998): pp. 119–34; D.G. Apostolopoulos, 'Ωραιοποιώντας τὰ μετὰ τήν 'Άλωση: ἡ περίπτωση τοῦ Γεννάδιου Σχολάρη', *Historica* 40 (2004): pp. 29–36; Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios*, pp. 74–8.

Sultan Mehmed II is known for some cosmopolitan interests and to have been void of religious zeal. Nevertheless, some older assertions regarding his supposed eagerness to make use of men, governing methods, and ideas from conquered Byzantium need to be critically reassessed as to whether they actually correspond to the facts.⁵¹ His reluctance to make any significant use of Christians, and more particularly Byzantines, in the administration of his Empire, as mentioned above, may not be irrelevant to an apparent avoidance of Byzantine models in his ideological expressions as addressed to his Christian subjects. In the series of surviving official documents dating from 1453 to 1480, addressed to western powers and written in the Greek language, the sultan is always described in the intitulations as μέγας αὐθέντης (*grand master*) and μέγας ἀμυρᾶς (*grand emir*) and not *basileus*, whereas his authority is described as αὐθεντία not βασιλεία.⁵² It seems that Mehmed II did not wish to be viewed by either his Christian subjects or by foreign Christian peoples as an imitation of the Byzantine emperors. It is perhaps for these reasons that he disregarded the use of ideological constructs offered to him by Byzantine scholars.

The three Byzantine scholars presented here are more or less the only ones to have expressed a view of Ottoman rule as a legitimate in the immediate period after the fall of Constantinople. In doing so, it could be suggested that they articulated not only an image but also a vision of the Ottoman Empire through a Byzantine spectrum. This is evident not so much in their effort to adapt some elements of Byzantine political theory to the new state of affairs, but primarily in their general view of it as a legitimate heir of Byzantium, though not a continuation of it. They also conveyed messages, though it seems that only Kritovoulos expressed his own message within the framework of a political agenda, expecting to influence his compatriots into conforming to the situation of Ottoman rule. The legitimacy theories that can be discerned in the texts of the three scholars studied above represent a secular perspective; this is obvious since no other religious justification could be proposed for the violent imposition of Muslim rule than its interpretation as a 'divine punishment', an essentially negative view that could only compromise the position of the conquered Christian peoples into the new state of affairs but not actually legitimize it. However, the secularist tendencies observed in these texts should not only be interpreted as responding to the need of these authors to justify the rule of the Ottomans, they reflect in the first place some common intellectual trends of their time, within the broader context of the Renaissance.

51 D.A. Zakythenos, "Ἡ Κωνσταντινούπολις τοῦ γένους. Τὰ μετὰ τὴν "Αλωσιν", in D.A. Zakythenos, *Μεταβυζαντινὰ καὶ Νέα Ἑλληνικά* (collected studies, Athens, 1978), p. 118; *idem*, "Ἡ Ἀλωσις τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ἡ πολιτικὴ καὶ οἰκονομικὴ ἐπίδρασις εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην", in *idem*, p. 90.

52 F. Miklosich and I. Müller (eds), *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi. Sacra et Profana* (6 vols, Vienna, 1865), vol. 3, pp. 286, 287, 290, 293, 295, 298, 299, 301, 302, 306; S.P. Lampros, "Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ὥς ἐπίσημος γλῶσσα τῶν σουλτάνων", *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 5 (1908): pp. 66, 67.

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Conclusions

Chris Wickham

The essays in this volume all contribute to a deeper understanding of ‘vision and meaning’ in the Byzantine world, and, potentially, outside it as well. The phrase is Leslie Brubaker’s, and it is the title of her until now most substantial work (it was a last-minute, but happy, substitution for her preferred title, *Image as exegesis*).¹ It is also a common theme of much of her work for the last 25 years, for she was already wrestling with the issue in the mid-1980s. What preoccupied her then, and has preoccupied her ever since, is the difference between the way that visual images (and, more widely, material culture) transmit meaning and the way that words do. She never thought that images were *just like* words; the semiology of images is not to be seen as a simple doublet of linguistics. (‘Words give resonance to the images, and the images nuance the words’ – to quote Kallirroë Linardou quoting Brubaker.)² But the way the difference works for us, and the way it worked for the Byzantines, has preoccupied her in a large number of separate publications. It also underlies her other major interests, notably the significance of the Iconoclast period, the period in which how images worked was the locus of a huge conflict, and, not least, her interest in gender. As she argued in ‘Memories of Helena’, texts are overwhelmingly written by men in our period, and reflect (élite) male norms and ideas; the major form of public communication available to (élite) women was the commissioning of buildings, and an analysis of the communicative role of material culture is thus important for any gender analysis in late Antiquity and the middle ages (east or west). It is not the only one, and Brubaker has indeed given us gender analyses of texts, but it is an important

1 L. Brubaker, *Vision and meaning in ninth-century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1999). I am very grateful to Liz James for a critique of this text.

2 L. Brubaker, ‘Every cliché in the book’, in L. James (ed.), *Art and text in Byzantine culture* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 58–62 (at p. 58) (the whole book is an important contribution to this question); *eadem*, *Vision and meaning*, pp. 408–11, among others.

one.³ The key issue for her here, as throughout her work, however remains how writing communicates differently from images; and how the semiology of images itself works. She does not front semiological theory that often, but did so in one of her most programmatic articles, 'Byzantine art in the ninth century', where she noted that 'the approach ..., obviously, flavoured this entire article'; less explicitly, it always does.⁴

How does that semiology work, then? Brubaker, who is always essentially writing about Byzantium, would doubtless prefer to say 'how *did* it work'? And it becomes clear in her writings that it worked in different ways according to when, or whom, one is talking about. For John of Damascus, Nikephoros and Photios, sight was superior to hearing, as Brubaker has often stressed (and see Liz James above): if a Byzantine visualized something, it was, in Photios' view, 'effortlessly transmitted ... to the memory'.⁵ We have the sense that Photios considered visualization as a wrap-around process which could not be matched by simple words. Photios was, however, a high-powered intellectual, heavily committed to building a religious culture based on images in post-Iconoclast Byzantium; the 'beholder's share' was not necessarily the same for others, or people in other periods (Iconoclasts, for example). Broadly, however, Brubaker makes three points here in her writings. First, that images reached more people than any words did (except presumably the liturgy, see Mary Cunningham above – after all our most articulated evidence is overwhelmingly about religious imagery).⁶ Second, that the way images most probably, or most frequently, conveyed meaning was semi-automatically or semi-consciously, as with the way that advertising works on us; and that this meaning was often conveyed through (or as) memory, 'by reconstructing and keeping alive the memories of the historically voiceless', an at least partially Photian point – although Photios was stressing a more conscious and spiritualized visualization.⁷ Third, that this process of conveying meaning characteristically operated through repetition. 'Repetition is fine; it works', or, less snappily but equally thoughtfully, 'Clichés or conventions ... become clichés because they encapsulate some deep-seated and more complex

3 L. Brubaker, 'Memories of Helena', in L. James (ed.), *Women, men and eunuchs* (London, 1997), pp. 52–75. For analyses of a text, Prokopios' *Anekdotai*: *eadem*, 'Sex, lies and textuality', in *eadem* and J.M.H. Smith (eds), *Gender in the early medieval world, east and west, 300–900* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 83–101; *eadem*, 'Gender and society', in M. Maas (ed.), *The age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 427–47.

4 L. Brubaker, 'Byzantine art in the ninth century', *BMGS* 13 (1989): pp. 23–93 (at p. 78).

5 *Ibid.*, p. 72; Brubaker, *Vision and meaning*, pp. 27–52.

6 E.g. L. Brubaker, 'Pictures are good to think with', in P. Odorico, P.A. Agapitos and M. Hintenberger (eds), *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérature de l'historiographie* (Paris, 2006), pp. 221–40 (at p. 225).

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 233 (quote), 239; Brubaker, 'Byzantine art', p. 81.

structure of thought particular to a given culture'.⁸ In a Benjaminian way, it is the very repetitiousness of Byzantine imagery, often lamented by traditional art historians, which gives it its force.

How can we tell what an image meant, to members of a culture who are all dead? Particularly as *ekphrasis*, the most obvious way into the subject, is all too evidently bounded by its own rules of literary genre? Clifford Geertz (following Gilbert Ryle) famously worried away at whether or how one could tell that a contraction of an eyelid was an involuntary twitch or a communicative wink; he thought the problem was almost insoluble as a metaphor for anthropological analysis – and most of his informants were actually alive.⁹ The only way for us, Brubaker would argue, is to look for repetition, for that at least assures us that a given example of visual communication *had* a meaning: it would be pointless, for example, for donors so regularly to have (and pay for) themselves painted as little figures at the bottom of a fresco, if viewers did not equally often recognize the claim to social and spiritual status of such a patron, wrapped up in the rhetoric of humility. A single small donor would not show us that, but a whole series surely does.

Material culture speaks through repetition. We cannot always gauge the nuance of its message, but we can register the communicative process. What goes for a thousand crucifixion scenes equally goes here for a hundred thousand African Red Slip Ware plates or Sgraffito Ware bowls, which carry meaning through large-scale consumer choice, as a post-processual archaeologist would argue.¹⁰ When we have grasped that communicative process, however, we have to face the problem of genre; for semiological communication has its own rules of genre as surely as linguistic communication does – it escapes the prison of language, but not that of genre. Brubaker is of course aware of this, and she has worried at the double issue of genre on numerous occasions, as for example when she analyses Ignatios the Deacon's emotionally-charged reaction to the to-us flat martyrdom sequences in so many Byzantine churches and manuscripts. She remarks also that the imagery invoked in Ignatios' reaction is in this case more time-bound than is the visual genre; she sees the issue of how writers and artists/artisans used genre, in their different ways, as a dynamic, not a static, one.¹¹ The 'beholding' of viewers changes across time, then. It is also transactional, as Brubaker notes when she analyses gestures in Byzantium, the meaning of which can be negotiated, or can shift according to the observer, or according to quite slight variations (for example in *proskynesis*

8 Quotes: *ibid.*, p. 81; L. Brubaker, 'Perception and conception', *Word and image* 5 (1989): pp. 19–32 (at p. 25).

9 C. Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures* (New York, 1973), pp. 6–9.

10 See e.g. I. Hodder, *Symbols in action* (Cambridge, 1982); R. Gilchrist, *Gender and material culture* (London, 1994).

11 Brubaker, 'Perception and conception', pp. 19–23. See further her analysis of visual genre in *eadem*, 'Every cliché', pp. 74–6.

– and as I write, I also think of the recent right-wing US critiques of Barack Obama for having bowed ‘too low’ to the emperor of Japan).¹²

To sum up here: trying to unpick genre-bound, transactional, changeable-across-time visual communication, when we cannot fully trust *ekphrasis*, our major written source, and when most of our ‘beholders’ were anyway illiterate and cannot communicate their reception of images to us at all, is, to say the least, daunting; but Brubaker gives us as many of the tools for doing so as she can, and as I at least can see available. These points need to be set out as clearly as possible, for they underpin most of the contributions to this book as well.

* * *

Each of the contributors has offered us here important analyses of the problem of meaning, sometimes with the ‘thickness’ of description which Geertz invoked as a partial solution to the questions he posed. Liz James focuses on touch, not so much as a sense separate from sight, but rather as a communicative element inherent to other senses; miracles very often depended on touch; maybe Photios’ wrap-around visualization did too; touching, too, had its own rules of genre (and etiquette), as shown in James’ analyses of who touches whom in the Leo Bible. (Her observation that passivity signified seniority has direct analogues in Brubaker’s recent work on the hierarchies of gesture. It is also worth adding that Michael II’s observation in 824, during Second Iconoclasm, that it was only the lower rows of images in churches that needed to be covered over, was because these were the ones that could be touched.¹³) Cristina Carile shows us that late Antique representations of churches and villas were not accurate depictions, and nor did it matter that they were not; they served as visual memories, and they thus reproduced ‘the same expression of wealth’ and power as did the buildings they represented. Dionysios Stathakopoulos gives us a careful textual analysis of the late Antique trope of a famine being so terrible that mothers ate their own children, and shows how all such characterizations, whether true or (mostly) false, were necessarily bounded by the ‘burden’ of genre. (Here I thought of Stephen Spender’s claim that, in his fire-fighting team in the London Blitz, no-one could see their experiences except through their memories and readings, apart from one young man protected by his illiteracy.¹⁴ However accurate that particular and problematic claim, it reminds us that genre and intertextuality bound even our own accounts to ourselves of experience, never mind those

12 L. Brubaker, ‘Gesture in Byzantium’, in M.J. Braddick (ed.), *The politics of gesture, Past and present*, supplement 4 (2009), pp. 36–56; the whole volume is relevant for this argument. For Obama: *The Guardian*, Tuesday, 17 November 2009.

13 A. Werminghoff (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Concilia* (3 vols, Hannover, 1908), vol. 2.2, pp. 475–80.

14 P. Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory* (Oxford, 1975), p. 173.

surviving from the past.) Averil Cameron gives us a very thoughtful account of the inseparability of text and image in the pre-Iconoclast period, and the new importance of religious objects of all kinds on the sixth century; 'images in Byzantium cannot stand alone', as she stresses, and Brubaker would certainly fully agree here. I will come back to this point at the end, for the issue of Iconoclasm lies at the core of Brubaker's recent work.

Tony Eastmond presents for us the Zarzma icon from Georgia, a ninth-century (or possibly earlier) image; it was refigured by a late ninth-century silver revetment, which was itself refigured twice by reworking and reframing in the next centuries. He notes that this increasingly enhanced (and hugely expensive) revetment marginalized the icon itself – initially a highly important object – so much so that in the end the icon was actually lost, and only the revetment survives. How the icon was visualized was, that is to say, progressively transformed – and not just because of the revetment, but as a result of changes in the visualization of the icon which made the revetment strategically desirable for its owners. Mary Cunningham discusses the crystallization of the Marian homiletic tradition into a canon around 900, and shows how such sermons became, in effect, part of the liturgy. She argues strongly that these repeated communications did not change in meaning across the centuries; rather, their aim was 'to transport listeners into God's eternal and unchanging tradition'. Kathleen Corrigan and Nancy Ševčenko discuss the earliest illustrated manuscript of John Klimakos' *Heavenly Ladder*, and demonstrate how this text shows a much greater parity between word and image as a composition 'designed for ... meditation' than later manuscripts of the text do, for the image of the ladder here complements the text closely, rather than departing from it, as in subsequent versions. Maja Kominko, focusing on personifications in illustrated Octateuchs, argues that some criticisms of Kurt Weitzmann have been too radical, and above all shows the differences in various manuscripts in the ways of 'translating verbal into visual'. These were sometimes, as in the Klimakos manuscripts, achieved in ways that developed the verbal meanings, although occasionally artists merely added extraneous material. Henry Maguire argues that the imagery of falconry as part of imperial self-presentation, in ceremonies and in the iconography of diplomatic gifts, reflected a new recognition in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries that the Byzantines could not dominate their neighbours, but instead had to manipulate them, as falconers manipulated their birds. Bob Ousterhout discusses the local memory of Gregory of Nazianzos, as shown in the material culture of Byzantine western Cappadocia, which turns out to have been very weak; he concludes that the image of Gregory as a universal not a local saint, argued by Brubaker from the perspective of the capital on the basis of the 880s Paris Gregory (Bibliothèque Nationale, cod. gr. 510), has its exact analogue in the landscape of his home province.

The last three contributions belong together in that they add a late and post-Byzantine perspective, one essential for any understanding of the way meaning works in Byzantium, for the evidence is so much better. Kallirroë Linardou develops the issue of how images convey meaning by showing how a fourteenth-century illustrated Book of Job introduces quite subtle critiques of Latins and Latin customs into several miniatures, which are visible as critiques only when seen in apposition to the text. Angeliki Lymberopoulou analyses a sixteenth-century Cretan icon of the Resurrection sequence in the Gospels, and shows how the painter integrated iconographical elements from Italian and Flemish art into a straightforward Byzantine-style multiple-scene icon; she proposes that this related to the multicultural audience that was a stable feature of Cretan society, one capable of being receptive to a wide range of visual messages. Finally, Konstantinos Moustakas returns to texts, and discusses the imagery of rulership used by the minority of Greek writers who accepted the late fifteenth-century Ottomans as legitimate monarchs. He shows that Byzantine political imagery was not only not employed by them, but hardly available (and never used by Mehmed II); instead, comparisons with Alexander, or with his opponents the Achaemenids – significantly, neither of them Christian – were the preferred legitimizing strategies. This article gives a closure to the Byzantine rhetorical tradition, at least in terms of secular political communication, and provides an effective ending to the volume.

What sort of Byzantium emerges from these papers? A fluid one, but not, I think, really a fragmented one. Byzantium was not a static society; only the ignorant could still think so; Byzantine culture changed, very substantially, several times between late Antiquity and the Palaiologans; but it did so in the context of some fairly stable parameters. (Actually, this was true of the West as well: Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua belongs to the same cultural world as Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome, in the same *way* as the Kariye Camii/Chora Monastery in Istanbul/Constantinople belongs to the same cultural world as Hagios Demetrios in Thessaloniki.) Several of the articles in this volume make the solidity of the Byzantine cultural tradition pretty clear. The long-term meanings of liturgical homilies in Cunningham's article here fit with the stability of the iconographical resources described by both Corrigan-Ševčenko and Kominko: in the latter two articles, different artists showed considerable flexibility in their different choices over how to display and play off the texts they were illustrating, but they were part of steady traditions all the same. Ousterhout's Cappadocia does not show a visual repertoire which distinguishes itself from that of the rest of the empire (this lack of distinctiveness of Cappadocian visual culture is clear in some of his other work as well).¹⁵ Remarkably, perhaps, this is in some respects even

15 E.g. R. Ousterhout, *A Byzantine settlement in Cappadocia* (Washington, DC, 2005), pp. 2–6.

true of Eastmond's Georgia, Chalcedonian but well beyond the edge of the empire; Georgian visual traditions were certainly distinct from Byzantine ones, but the origin of miraculous icons seems to lie in the same period in each, with acheiropoietic images like Mandylia starting slightly earlier, and even, Eastmond speculates, some influence of Iconoclasm – as well as the necessity to respond to Monophysitism in the Armenian borderlands of south Georgia. Only at the very end of the history of Byzantium do our articles show the beginnings of a more differentiated cultural adaptation, as for example in the very different responses to Latin culture shown by Linardou and Lymberopoulou.

The other aspect of Byzantium that emerges was perhaps implicit in the project from the start (as well as in other recent projects, such as Liz James' *Art and text*):¹⁶ the considerable, and enduring, sophistication that the Byzantines showed in their juxtaposition of words and images, and in their construction of meaning through visual images. The ingenious ways Linardou's Job artist chose to critique the Latins, or the subtlety shown by Maguire's emperors in exporting their falcon symbolism to doubtless unenthusiastic Venetians – or the vast complexity of the Paris Gregory, as shown in Brubaker's monograph¹⁷ – is striking, and contrasts with some of the more vehement ideological statements in both some Byzantine visual programmes elsewhere and in numerous non-Byzantine ones. But the Byzantines had a many-levelled understanding of their own material culture which extended to a very tactile dealing, as James emphasizes above all; and they, more than any other society, developed a theory of visual culture in the century after 780 which had been fought for, and as a result was strikingly explicit and heavily intellectualized. This above all made Byzantine visual meaning unusually conscious and layered, as we have amply seen in this book.

That theology was of course the result of the *eikonomachia*, the Iconoclast Controversy as we usually call it; this has been the focus of most of Brubaker's recent work, including one published book and another just out written together with John Haldon, as well as a number of articles focusing on the origins of the controversy. This is where she tracks through in most detail the developing complexity of image theory, particularly from the Second Council of Nicaea (787) onwards, and the way it reacts, dialectically, to a wide range of cultural and material-cultural shifts of all types.¹⁸ Cameron's article is the only one here to deal with this broad theme (apart from a glancing reference in Eastmond's contribution), so it seems to me appropriate to finish with some observations on her rich piece, and through it, on the origins of

16 See above, n. 2.

17 Brubaker, *Vision and meaning*.

18 L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast era (ca 680–ca 850): the sources* (Aldershot, 2001); *idem*, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast era (c.680–850)* (Cambridge, 2010); L. Brubaker, 'Icons before Iconoclasm', *Settimane di studio* 45 (1998): pp. 1215–54.

Iconoclasm as a problem. Cameron here (as in some earlier work) reconstructs a religious world in the late sixth and seventh centuries in which objects of all kinds – relics, portraits of Christ and the saints, and that half-way house, acheiropoietic images which had no human painters – gained religious importance. This does not depart at all from Brubaker's picture of the period (itself substantially influenced by Cameron). Nor does Cameron disagree with Brubaker's main argument, that 'icons' in our modern technical sense – that is to say religious paintings which offered a window into the spiritual or divine world, an immediate access to the saint depicted – cannot be documented with certainty before the 680s. But Cameron essentially thinks that the association of religious significance with objects, and a growing visualization of sanctity, which developed in the late sixth and the early seventh centuries, is more important than the attachment of a heightened spiritual power to *human-made* objects, and the hyper-visualization of sanctity expressed by the spiritual power attached to icons as windows, which seems only to have developed at the end of the seventh century. Clearly, both developments were important, as crucial steps away from a late Antique to a medieval religious sensibility. Brubaker is more interested in the second because she is particularly interested in Iconoclasm (and, more broadly, in human-made artefacts), and what the Iconoclast Council of Hieria (754) condemned as the 'unlawful art of the painters'.¹⁹ It may also be that the slight difference in emphasis comes from the fact that Cameron started as a late Antique historian looking forward and Brubaker started as a ninth-century (art) historian looking backward; so maybe the difference does not matter.

What does seem a crucial issue, however, is not one fronted by either scholar, but one which is of major importance to me: the question of where, if anywhere, the structural break with Antiquity lay in Byzantium. I have never had the slightest difficulty in thinking that this was the result of the Arab conquests, or maybe the whole period of Persian and then Arab occupation of half the eastern Roman Empire, starting therefore in the 610s. But when did this become seen, understood, by the Byzantines as irreversible, and thus of world-changing cultural significance? Not until the final fall of Egypt in 640–42, for sure; but Egypt had fallen before and been retaken. Maybe not until the 660s, when the first *fitna* ended without the expected break-up of Arab hegemony; it was then that on the political and economic level the first clear signs of Byzantine military reorganization and a down-scaling of the currency in the Byzantine heartland can be detected. Possibly not until the 690s, when another *fitna* was followed by renewed conquest of Byzantine territory in Africa, and we find a wave of apocalyptic literature attested.²⁰

19 G.D. Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florence, 1867), vol. 13, col. 240C; translation taken from D.J. Sahas, *Icon and logos* (Toronto, 1986), p. 75.

20 R.G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 257 ff.

This narrative puts the stress on the later seventh century as the period in which we might look for a cultural break, even though (as always) many of the new elements which came in were prefigured in detail beforehand. I think it significant that one notable casualty was the east Roman propensity to Christological controversy. This was so dominant in the East right into the seventh century, with a last flowering in the mid-century Monothelete debate; but that was put to bed by Constantine IV (668–85), and after that, in the Byzantine lands, Christological fervour virtually vanished. Instead, by the 691–92 council in Trullo, Byzantines worried about the physical locus of the holy. The Iconomachy hardly alluded to Christology at all, apart from ritual and vague accusations of Monophysitism by both sides (Hiereia threw in Arianism and Nestorianism as well; at Nicaea in 787 the Iconophiles just laughed at this, while returning many of the same epithets).²¹ Over 300 years of passionate argument faded in the generation after 680, and the whole epistemology of debate shifted. This seems to me significant as a cultural change. It does not remove the significance of the changes of the previous period, but it is significant all the same. It is one of the major shifts which is in dialectic with the newly-burning issue of the legitimacy of icons, as Brubaker has made so clear.

What we learn from this book is that vision had complex meanings for the Byzantines. Visual images were not reducible to the representations of written texts; they were part of material culture; but, as part of that, they still communicated. One of the major reasons why we worry at the difference between word and (visual) image is because the lack of fit between them is not just interesting in itself, but is a guide to how the communication of the image – the element that is hardest to reconstruct – actually worked: the lack of fit gives us a sort-of 3D vision of the communicative process, visual and scriptural alike. For the Byzantines, that might have had a spiritual function, to get them closer to the divine. For us, it has a more material function, to get us closer to the past. This book helps us to do so, along with Leslie Brubaker's whole body of published work.

21 E.g. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 13, cols 241E–5C, 252B–3D, 260D–E, 349B.

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*Notes to the Index: all buildings/monuments are listed under the city in which they are located (e.g. Thessaloniki – Hagios Demetrios). Alternative spellings which appear in the text are listed together (with cross-referencing where appropriate). Historical works are not listed by title, but can be found by searching references to the author (e.g. for the Life of St Artemios, look up references to Artemios (saint)). Exceptions are named manuscripts (indexed by location e.g. Oxford – Bodleian Library, Laud. gr...), and texts by anonymous authors. Modern historians are indexed if referred to by name in the main text. Footnotes are not indexed, nor are references by contributors to other sections in this book. For clarity biography is sometimes given in the index and includes details relevant to the main text (e.g. Constantine I (emperor, saint)). References in **bold** indicate images.*

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The main themes of this volume are the identification of 'visions', 'messages', and 'meanings' in various facets of Byzantine culture and the possible differences in the perception of these visions, messages and meanings as seen by their original audience and by modern scholars. The volume addresses the methodological question of how far interpretations should go – whether there is a tendency to read too much into too little or whether not enough attention is paid to apparent minutiae that may have been important in their historical context. As the essays span a wide chronological era, they also present a means of assessing the relative degrees of continuity and change in Byzantine visions, messages and meanings over time.

Thus, as highlighted in the concluding section, the book discusses the validity of existing notions regarding the fluidity of Byzantine culture: when continuity was a matter of a rigid adherence to traditional values and when a manifestation of the ability to adapt old conventions to new circumstances, and it shows that in some respects, Byzantine cultural history may have been less fragmented than is usually assumed. Similarly, by reflecting not just on new interpretations, but also on the process of interpreting itself, the contributors demonstrate how research within Byzantine studies has evolved over the past thirty years from a set of narrowly defined individual disciplines into a broader exploration of interconnected cultural phenomena.

Cover illustration: Mary Magdalene and angel, detail of the *Noli me Tangere* icon. © Trustees of the British Museum.

